



Mary Griffith

Cambridge

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THE
HISTORY
OF

Miss *Betsy Thoughtless*,

VOL. II.



DUBLIN:

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THE

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Mary: THE *Trygva*:
H I S T O R Y
O F
Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

C H A P. I.

Relates only to such things, as the reader may reasonably expect would happen.

AS much taken up, as Miss Betsy was, with the pleasure of having gained a new admirer, she could not forbear, after she came home, making some reflection on the value of her conquest;---she had found nothing agreeable, either in his person, or conversation:---the first seemed to her stiff and aukward, and looked, as if not made for his cloaths; and the latter, weak, romantic, and bombast:---in fine, he was altogether such as she could not think of living with as a husband, though the rank and figure she was told he held in the world, made her willing to receive him as a lover.---In fine, though she could not consent to sacrifice herself to his quality, she took a pride to sacrifice his quality to her vanity.

No overtures of marriage having been made to her since Mr. Munden began his courtship, and that gentleman growing, as she fancied at least, a little too presuming, on finding himself the only lover, she was not a little pleased at the opportunity of giving him a rival, whose quality might over-awe

his hopes.---In this idea, she was far from repenting her behaviour towards him the night before : but how little soever she regarded what mortification she gave the men, she always took care to treat her own sex with a great deal of politeness ; and reflecting, that she had been guilty of an omission, in not sending her servant to excuse herself to the ladies, who expected her, went herself in the morning to make her own apology.

In the mean time, Mr. Munden, who it is certain was very much out of humour, and impatient to let her know some part of the sentiments her message had inspired him with, came to make her a morning visit, having some business, which he knew would detain him from waiting on her in the afternoon.—On finding she was abroad, he desired the maid to favour him with her lady's standish, which she accordingly bringing to him, he sat down, and without taking much consideration, wrote the following letter, and left it for her on the table.

To Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ MADAM,

‘ **A** Midst the enchanting encouragement, with
 ‘ which you have been pleased to admit my
 ‘ services, I could not, without calling your honour and generosity in question, be altogether
 ‘ void of hope, that you intended to afford them
 ‘ one day, a recompence more ample than a bare
 ‘ acceptance.

‘ Judge then of my surprise, at the repulse I
 ‘ met with at Mrs. Modely's door. — I could not
 ‘ think it any breach of the respect I owe you, to
 ‘ call on you at the house of your mantua-maker ;
 ‘ —I could not imagine it possible for you to have
 ‘ any engagements at such a place, capable of preventing you from keeping those, that you had
 ‘ made with persons for whom you profess an esteem :

‘ — On

‘ —on the contrary, I rather expected you would
‘ have permitted me to conduct you thence, with
‘ the same readiness you have done from most
‘ of the other places where you have been, since I
‘ first had the honour of being acquainted with
‘ you.

‘ I know very well, that it is the duty of every
‘ lover to submit, in all things, to the pleasure of
‘ the beautiful object, whose chains he wears ;---
‘ yet, madam, as you have hitherto made mine
‘ easy, you must pardon me, when I say, this sud-
‘ den transition from gentleness to cruelty, appears
‘ to me to contain a mystery, which though I
‘ dread, I am distracted for the explanation of.

‘ Some business of great moment prevents my
‘ waiting on you this afternoon, but shall attend
‘ your commands to-morrow at the usual hour,
‘ when I still flatter myself, you will relieve the
‘ anxieties, and put an end to the suspense of him,
‘ who is,

‘ With the greatest sincerity of heart,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ And most faithfully devoted servant,

‘ G. MUNDEN.’

Miss Betsy, at her return home, found also another billet directed for her, which they told her, had been brought by a servant belonging to Sir Frederick Fineer ;---she gave that from Mr. Munden, however, the preference of reading first, not indeed through choice, but chance, that happening to be first put into her hands.---As soon as she had looked it over, she laughed, and said to herself, ‘ The
‘ poor man is jealous already, though he knows
‘ not of whom, or why ;---what will become of
‘ him when he shall be convinced ?——I suppose
‘ he was sure of having me, and ’tis high time to
‘ mortify his vanity.’

She then proceeded to Sir Frederick's epistle, in which she found herself more deify'd than ever she had been, by all her lovers put together.

To the nonpareil of her sex, the incomparable Miss
BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

' *Divine Charmer,*

' **T**HOUGH I designed myself the inexpressible
' pleasure of kissing your fair hands this
' evening, I could not exist till then, without tel-
' ling you how much I adore you : — you
' are the empress of my heart, — the goddess
' of my soul ; — the one loves you with the most
' loyal and obedient passion, — the other regards
' you as the sole mover, and director of all its mo-
' tions. — I cannot live without you, — it is
' you alone can make me blest, or miserable. —
' O then pronounce my doom, and keep me not
' suspended between heaven and hell. — Words
' cannot describe the ardency of my flame ; —
' it is actions only that can do it. — I lay myself,
' and all that I am worth, an humble offering at
' your feet. — Accept it, I beseech you, but ac-
' cept it soon ; for I consume away, in the fire of
' my impatient wishes, and, in a very short time,
' there will be nothing left for you, but the sha-
' dow of the man, who is,

' With the most pure devotion,

' MADAM,

' Your beauty's slave,

' And everlasting adorer,

' F. FINEER.'

' Good lack,' cried Miss Betsy, ' he is in a great
' haste too, but I fancy he must wait a while, as
' many of better sense have done. — What a ro-
' mantic jargon is here ? — One would think he
' had been consulting all the ballads since fair Rosa-
' mond,

‘mond, and the children in the wood, for fine phrases to melt me into pity.’

She wondered, as indeed she had good reason, that a man of his birth, and who it must be supposed had an education suitable to it, should express himself in such odd terms; but then she was tempted to imagine, that it was only his over care to please her, had made him stretch his wit beyond its natural extent, and that if he had loved her less, he would have been able to have told her so in a much better stile.——Possessed with this fancy,---
 ‘What a ridiculous thing this love is!’ said she:
 ‘What extravagancies does it some times make men guilty of!——yet one never sees this madness in them after they become husbands;---
 ‘if I were to marry Sir Frederick, I do not doubt but he would soon recover his senses.’

How does a mind, unbroke with cares and disappointments, entirely free from passion, and perfectly at peace with itself, and with the world, improve, and dwell on every thing, that affords the least matter for its entertainment? ——This gay young lady found as much diversion in anticipating the innocent pranks she intended to play with the authors of these two letters, as an infant does in first playing with a new baby, and afterwards plucking it to pieces; so true is the observation of the poet, that

‘All are but children of a larger growth.’

But this sprightliness of humour in Miss Betsy, soon received a sad and sudden interruption: ——having sent, as she constantly did every day, to enquire after the health of Mr. Goodman, her servant returned with an account, that he had expired that morning.——Though this was an event, which she, and all who knew him, had expected for some time, yet could she not be told of the death of a gentleman, under whose care and protection she so long

had been, and who had behaved, in all respects, so like a parent towards her, without being very deeply affected with the news :——she was then at dinner, but threw down her knife and fork, rose from the table, and retired to her chamber and wept bitterly ;——the more violent emotions of grief were soon asswaged, and her melancholy and dejection of spirits continued much longer, and while it did so, she had the power of making the most just reflections on the vain pursuits, the fleeting pleasures, and all the noise and hurry of the giddy world.—Love, and all the impertinencies which bear that name, now appeared only worthy her contempt ; and recollecting, that Sir Frederick had mentioned visiting her that evening, she sent a servant immediately to Mrs. Modely's, desiring her to acquaint that gentleman, that she had just lost a very dear friend, and was in too much affliction to admit of any company.

This being the day, on which Mr. Francis Thoughtless was expected to be in London, this affectionate sister perceiving, by his last letter to her, that his health was not perfectly established, was under a very great concern, lest he should be put to some inconvenience by Mr. Goodman's death, for a proper lodging on his first arrival ; but she soon found her tender fears, on this occasion, altogether groundless.

Those objections, which had hindered Mr. Thomas Thoughtless from taking her into his family, had not the same weight in relation to Mr. Francis, whose sex set him above meddling with those domestic concerns, the command of which he had given to another, and his reputation would suffer nothing by being under the roof with the mistress of his brother's amorous inclinations.

He went to the inn where he knew the L———e stage put up,——welcomed Mr. Francis with open
arms,

arms, as soon as he alighted from the coach, and gave him all the demonstrations of brotherly affection, that the place they were in would admit of ; then conducted him to his house, and insisted that he should not think of any other home, till he was better provided for, and settled in the world.

A servant belonging to the elder Mr. Thoughtless, was immediately dispatched to Miss Betsy, with a letter from the younger, and it was from this man that she received the agreeable intelligence, that the two brothers were together. — The terms in which Mr. Francis wrote to her were these :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear sister,

‘ **H**EAVEN be thanked I am at last got safe to London; — a place, which I assure you, some months ago I almost despaired of ever seeing more. My brother has just given me an account of the death of honest Mr. Goodman, and, as I doubt not but you are very much concerned, as indeed we have all reason to be, for the loss of so sincere and valuable a friend, I am very impatient to see you, and give you what consolation is in my power ; but the fatigue of my journey, after so long an illness, requires my taking some immediate repose ; — I shall, however, wait on you to-morrow morning, ’till when, believe me as ever,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ Dear sister,

‘ Your affectionate brother,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ F. THOUGHTLESS.’

‘ P. S. My brother purposes to come with me, but if any thing should happen to prevent his visit, you

‘ you may depend on one from me.—Once more,
 ‘ my dear sister, good night.’

In the present situation of Miss Betsy’s mind, she could not have received a more sensible satisfaction, than what she felt on this young gentleman’s arrival; but what ensued upon it will in due time and place appear.

C H A P. II.

Contains only some few particulars of little moment in themselves, but serve to usher in matters of more importance.

MR. Goodman, who, both living and dying, had sincerely at heart the welfare of all with whom he had any concern, could not content himself to leave the world, without giving to those, who had been under his care, such advice as he thought necessary for their future happiness.

Accordingly, the day preceding that which happened to be his last, he sent for Mr. Thoughtless, and on his being come, and seated by his bedside, he took his hand, and began to remonstrate to him, in the most pathetic, though very gentle, terms, how unjustifiable to the eyes of heaven, and how disreputable to those of the world, it was, to avow and indulge, in the public manner he did, an unwarrantable flame.

‘ I never was severe,’ said he, ‘ in censuring
 ‘ the frailties of youth and nature; but think the
 ‘ claim they have to pardon consists chiefly in an
 ‘ endeavour to conceal them;—when gloried in,
 ‘ they lose the name of frailties, and become vices:
 ‘ —besides, others by our example might be
 ‘ emboldened to offend, and if so, what are we
 ‘ but accessory to their faults, and answerable for
 ‘ them, as well as for our own?—You are at
 ‘ present,’

‘ present,’ continued he, ‘ the head of your family,——have a large estate,——are young,——handsome,——accomplished ;——in fine, have all the requisites to make a shining character in life, and to be a service and honour to your country. —How great a pity would it be, that such a stock of fortune’s blessings,——such present benefits, and such glorious expectations, should all be squandered in the purchase of one guilty pleasure.’

He then proceeded to a short discussion of the difference of a lawful and unlawful communication between the sexes ;——he expatiated on the wise and laudable institution of marriage ;——the solid comforts arising from that state, in the choice of a worthy partner ; ——the many advantages of an honourable alliance ;——the serene and lasting pleasures to be found in the society of a faithful, discreet, and endearing companion.—‘ A wife,’——said he, with a sigh, which the memory of his own hard fate drew from him, ‘ may some times be bad, but a mistress we are sure is never good ;——her very character denies all confidence to be reposed in her ;——it is the interest of a wife to secure the honour of her husband, because she must suffer in his disgrace ;——a mistress having no reputation of her own, regards not that of her keeper.——It is the interest of a wife to be frugal of her husband’s substance, because she must be a sharer in those misfortunes, which the want of œconomy creates ;——but it is the interest of a mistress to sell her favours as dear as she can, and to make the best provision she can for herself, because her subsistence is precarious, and depends wholly on the will of him who supports her.——These, my dear friend,’ continued he, ‘ are truths, which I hope you will not wait for experience to convince you of.’

It is probable Mr. Thoughtless did not relish this admonition ;

admonition;—he seemed, however, to take it in good part, and returned for answer, that he should ever retain the most grateful sense of the kind concern he expressed for him, and added, that whatever inconveniencies he might have been hurried into, by an inadvertent passion, he should always take care not to become the dupe of any woman.

Mr. Goodman then fell into some discourse, concerning the younger Mr. Thoughtless, and the elder telling him, that, by his interest, he procured a commission for him on very easy terms, that worthy old gentleman appeared very much pleased, and said, he hoped they would always live together in that perfect amity, which both good policy and nature demands, between persons of the same blood.

‘ And now,’ continued he, ‘ I have but one thing more to recommend to you,——and that is in relation to your sister, Miss Betsy.---I doubt not of her innocence, but I fear her conduct;—her youth,--her beauty,--the gaiety of her temper, and the little vanities of her sex, are every day exposing her to temptations fatal to reputation;——I wish, therefore, she were well married;—I know not how the courtship of Mr. Trueworth happened to be broke off, perhaps on some trifling occasion, either on the one or the other side:--if so, ’tis likely Mr. Francis, when he comes to town, may bring about a reconciliation.--According to my judgment of mankind, she cannot make a more deserving choice.--There is another gentleman who now makes his addresses to her,--his name is Munden;--but I know nothing of his character,--he never applied to me, nor did she consult me on the affair;---it will however be a brother’s part in you, to enquire how far he may be worthy of her.’

Perceiving Mr. Thoughtless listened to him, with a good deal of attention, he went on;---‘ I should

‘ should also think it right,’ said he, ‘ that while she remains in a single state, she should be boarded in some social, reputable family ;--I do not like this living by herself,--her humour is too volatile to endure solitude ; she must have her amusements ; and the want of them at home, naturally carries her in search of them broad :--I could wish,’ added he, ‘ that you would tell her what I have said to you upon this subject ; she is convinced I am her friend, I believe has some regard for me, and it may be, my dying admonitions will have greater effect upon her, than all she has heard from me before.’

Mr. Goodman, after this, beginning to grow extremely faint, and altogether unable to hold any farther discourse, the brother of Miss Betsy judged it convenient to retire, assuring the other, as he took his leave, that no part of what he had said, should be lost upon him.

Though the promise he had made Mr. Goodman, was chiefly dictated by his complaisance, yet it was not totally forgot after he had left him.---As to what that worthy gentleman had said, in relation to his own manner of living, he thought he had talked well, but he had talked like an old man, and that it was time enough for him, to part with his pleasures, when he had no longer any inclination to pursue them ;---but what had been alledged to him concerning his sister’s conduct, made a much deeper impression on his mind :--he considered, that the honour of a family depended greatly on the female part of it, and therefore resolved to omit nothing in his power, to prevent Miss Betsy from being caught by any snares, that might be laid to entrap her innocence.

He communicated to Mr. Francis Thoughtless on his arrival, all that Mr. Goodman had said to him on this score, and his own sentiments upon it : --- that young gentleman was entirely of his brother’s

ther's opinion in this point, and they both agreed, that marriage was the only sure refuge from temptation, for a young woman of Miss Betsey's disposition and humour.---They had a very long and pretty serious conversation on this head, the result of which was, that they should go together to her, and each exert all the influence he had over her, in order to draw from her some farther eclairsissement intentions, than could yet be gathered of her from her-behaviour.

Miss Betsey, who little suspected their design, received them with all the tenderness that could be expected from a sister, especially her brother Frank, whose return after so long an absence, gave her, in reality, an infinite satisfaction; but she had scarce time to give him all the welcomes, with which her heart overflowed, before the elder Mr. Thoughtless fell on the topic of Mr. Goodman, and the misfortune they sustained, in the loss of so good a friend; after which, 'He has left you a legacy,' sister,' said he:--'A legacy!' cried she, 'pray of what kind?' 'Such a one,' replied he, 'as perhaps you will not be very well pleased in receiving, nor would I chuse to deliver it, but for two reasons;--first, that the injunctions of a dying friend are not to be dispensed with; and secondly, that it is of a nature, I fear, you stand in too much need of.'

Miss Betsey, whose ready wit made her presently comprehend the meaning of these words, replied with some smartness, that whatever she stood in need of, she should certainly receive with pleasure, and he might have spared himself the trouble of a prelude, for any thing that could be delivered by him, or bequeathed to her by Mr. Goodman.

He then told her, how that gentleman, the day before his death, had sent for him, 'For no other purpose,' said he, 'than to talk to me on your account,

‘account, and to exhort me as your brother,
 ‘and now your guardian, to have a watchful eye
 ‘over all your actions;---to remind you of some
 ‘inadvertencies of the past, and to warn you a-
 ‘gainst falling into the like for the future :---ferry
 ‘I am, to find myself under a necessity of speaking
 ‘to you in this manner; but harsh as it may seem
 ‘at present, I doubt not, but you will hereafter
 ‘own, is a proof of the greatest affection I could
 ‘show you.’ He then repeated to her, all that
 Mr. Goodman had said to him, in relation to her;
 to which he also added many things of his own,
 which he thought might serve to strengthen, and
 enforce the arguments made use of by the other.

It is impossible to describe the various and dis-
 turbed emotions, which discovered themselves in
 the countenance of Miss Betsy, during the whole
 time her brother was speaking;---she looked ex-
 tremely grave, at the manner in which he ushered
 what he had to deliver to her from Mr. Goodman,
 ---appeared confounded and perplexed at what
 she heard that gentleman had said concerning Mr.
 Trueworth,—was quite peevish at the mention of
 Mr. Munden, but when told of the dangers to
 which she was exposed, by living alone, and trust-
 ed with the management of herself, her eyes spark-
 led with disdain and rage, at a remonstrance she
 looked upon as so unnecessary and so unjust.

If this message had been sent to her by any o-
 ther, than Mr. Goodman, whose memory, on
 account of the benefits she had received from him,
 was precious to her; or had it been repeated by
 any other mouth than that of a brother, she had
 certainly vented the indignation she was possessed
 of, in the most bitter terms; but gratitude, respect,
 and love, denying her this remedy, she burst into a
 flood of tears. — ‘Good God!’ cried she, ‘what
 ‘have I done to raise such cruel suggestions in the
 VOL. II. C heart

‘heart of any friend?—Which of my actions can
 ‘malice construe into a crime?—I challenge my
 ‘worst of enemies to prove me guilty of any thing
 ‘might justly cast a blemish on my reputation,
 ‘much less to call my virtue in question.’

The two brothers seemed very much moved at the agonies that they saw her in, especially the elder, who repenting he had gone so far, took her in his arms, and tenderly embracing her, ‘My dear
 ‘sister,’ said he, ‘you wrong your friends, while
 ‘you imagine yourself wronged by them;—your
 ‘reputation, I hope, is clear;—your virtue not
 ‘suspected;—it is not to accuse you of any guilt,
 ‘but to prevent your innocence from becoming a
 ‘prey to the guilt of others, that Mr. Goodman
 ‘sent you his dying admonition, or that I took up-
 ‘on me to deliver it.’

Mr. Francis Thoughtless seconded what the other had said, and both joining their endeavours to pacify the late tempest of her mind, she soon recovered that good humour and chearfulness, which was too natural to her to be long suspended by any accident whatsoever.

‘I flattered myself,’ said the younger of these gentlemen, ‘that cautions of this kind would have
 ‘been altogether unnecessary, and that before now
 ‘you would have been disposed of to a man, under
 ‘whose protection all that is dear to your sex had
 ‘been secure;—I need not tell you,’ continued he, ‘that I mean Mr. Trueworth.’

Miss Betsy looking a little confused, and not making any reply, the elder Mr. Thoughtless immediately took up the word, and said, he had heard so high a character of that gentleman’s merit, that he had wished for few things with more ardency, than the honour of being allied to him, and that he never could find out what objection his sister had,

had, to accept of an offer so every way to her advantage.

To this Miss Betsy made answer, though not without some disorder, and hesitation in her speech, —that she had never made any objection, either to his person or qualification ;—but that she did not care to marry yet awhile, and he had not love enough to wait the event of her resolution in that point ;—that, besides, their humours did not suit, and there was little likelihood they would agree better after marriage ;—that there had been a little pique between them ;—that he gave himself airs of resenting something she had said, and thereupon had sent her a very impertinent letter since which she had never seen him ;— ‘ so that,’ added she, ‘ our breaking off acquaintance is wholly owing to ‘ himself.’

Mr. Francis not doubting but this letter would explain what he so much desired to know the truth of, cried out to her hastily, to let him see it ;—Miss Betsy already repented, that she had mentioned such a thing, as she was conscious there were some expressions in it, which would greatly countenance the disagreeable remonstrances she had just now received ; but she wanted artifice to pretend, she had either lost, or burnt it, and went that instant to her cabinet, where easily finding it, she gave it into her brother’s hands, with these words, ‘ he reproaches me,’ said she, ‘ with things I know ‘ nothing of, and in terms, which, I think, do not ‘ very well become the passion he pretended to have ‘ for me.’

‘ That he once loved you,’ said Mr. Francis, coolly, ‘ I am very certain ;— how his sentiments may be changed, and the reasons of ‘ their being so, this may, perhaps, give me ‘ room to guess.’ He then read the letter aloud, ‘ and while he was doing so, several times cast a

look at Miss Betsey, which shewed he was highly dissatisfied with her, for having given any cause for the reflections contained in it.

‘ I see very well’, said he, returning her the letter, ‘ that he has done with you, and that it is your own fault :--I shall, however, talk to him on the affair, and if there be a possibility of accommodating matters between you, shall endeavour it for your sake.’

Here Miss Betsey’s spirit roused itself, in spite of the respect she had for her brothers; ‘ I beseech you, Sir,’ said she to Mr. Francis, ‘ not to go about to force your sister upon any man;--if Mr. Truworth, of his own accord, renews the professions he has made, I shall on your account receive them as I did before any misunderstanding happened between us; but as to changing my condition, either in favour of him or any other man, I know not when, or whether ever I shall be in the humour to do it:—you may, however, if you please,’ continued she, ‘ hear what he has to say for himself, and what mighty matters against me, that can excuse the abrupt manner of his quitting me.’

‘ I know not as yet,’ replied Mr. Francis, with some vehemence, ‘ whether I shall interfere any further in the thing, and am heartily sorry I have given myself any trouble about it, since you so little consider your own interest, or will follow the advice of those, who are at the pains to consider for you.’-- ‘ Come, come,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ you are both too fiery; --I am confident my sister has too much good sense to suffer any little caprice to impede her real happiness,---therefore, prethee Frank, let us drop this subject at present, and leave her to her own reflections.’

To which Miss Betsy answered, that there required but little reflection to instruct her what she ought to do, and that though she could not consent to be kept always in leading-strings, the love and respect she had for her brothers, would never permit her to do any thing without their approbation. There passed nothing more of consequence between them at this visit ; but what had been said served to engross pretty much the minds of each of them after they were separated.

C H A P. III.

Has somewhat more business in it than the former.

THOUGH Miss Betsy was very conscious of the merits of Mr. Truworth, and equally convinced of the friendship her brother Francis had for him, and had therefore doubted not, but when that young gentleman should arrive, he would reason strongly with her, on the little regard she had paid to his recommendations, or the advantages of the alliance he had proposed ; yet she did not expect the satisfaction of their first meeting would have been imbittered, by a resentment, such, as it seemed to her, he had testified on the occasion.

She easily perceived the two brothers had consulted together, before they came to her, in what manner they should behave towards her ; and this she looked upon as a sort of proof, that they intended to assume an authority over her, to which they had no claim.—‘ The love I have for them,’ said she to herself, ‘ will always make me take a pleasure in obliging them, and doing every thing they desire of me ; but they are intirely mistaken, if they imagine it in their power to awe me into compliance with their injunctions.’

‘ And yet,’ cried she again, ‘ what other aim

' than my happiness and interest can they propose
 ' to themselves, in desiring to have me under their
 ' direction?—Poor Frank has given me proofs,
 ' that I am very dear to him, and, I believe, my
 ' brother Thoughtless is not wanting in natural af-
 ' fection for me; why then should I reject the
 ' council of two friends, whose sincerity there is
 ' not a possibility of suspecting?—They know
 ' their sex, and the dangers to which ours are ex-
 ' posed, by the artifices of base designing men:—
 ' I have had some escapes, which I ought always
 ' to remember, enough to keep me from falling
 ' into the like ugly accidents again;—how near
 ' was I to everlasting ruin, by slighting the warning
 ' given me by Mr. Truworth!

This reflection bringing into her mind many pas-
 sages of her behaviour towards that gentleman, she
 could not forbear justifying his conduct, and con-
 demning her own:—‘I have certainly used him
 ‘ ill,’ pursued she, with a sigh, ‘and if he should
 ‘ return, and forgive what is past, I think I ought,
 ‘ in gratitude, to reward his love!’

She was in this contemplating mood when her
 servant told her, that Mrs. Modely had been to
 wait upon her, but on hearing her brothers were
 with her, went away, saying, she would come
 again, which she now was, and begged to speak
 with her.

Miss Betsey was in this moment just beginning to
 feel some sort of pleasure in the idea of Mr. True-
 worth’s renewing his addresses, and was a little
 peevish at the interruption;—she ordered, however,
 that the woman should come up,—‘Well, Mrs.
 ‘ Modely,’ said she, as soon as she saw her enter,
 ‘what stuff have you brought me now?’

‘Ah, charming Miss Betsey,’ replied she, ‘you
 ‘ fine ladies, and great fortunes, think you may do
 ‘ any thing with the men:—poor Sir Frederick
 ‘ will

‘ will break his heart, or run mad, that’s to be
 ‘ sure, if you don’t send him a favourable answer
 ‘ to this letter.’——In speaking these words, she
 delivered a letter to Miss Betsy, which that young
 lady opened with a careless air, and it contained
 these high-flown lines :

‘ This humbly to be presented to the most beau-
 ‘ tiful of all beauties, the super-excellent
 ‘ Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *Adorable creature,*

‘ **I** AM grieved to the very soul, to hear you
 ‘ have any subject for affliction ; but am very
 ‘ certain, that in being deprived of your divine
 ‘ presence, I endure a more mortal stab than any
 ‘ loss you have sustained can possibly inflict.——I
 ‘ am consumed with the fire of my passion :——I
 ‘ have taken neither repose, nor food, since first I
 ‘ saw you :——I have lived only on the idea of
 ‘ your charms :——O ! nourish me with the sub-
 ‘ stance !——Hide me in your bosom from the foul
 ‘ fiend despair, that is just ready to lay hold on
 ‘ me.

‘ The passion I am possessed of for you is not
 ‘ like that of other men ;——I cannot wait the
 ‘ tedious forms of courtship ; ——there is no me-
 ‘ dium between death and the enjoyment of you ;
 ‘ ——the circle of your arms, or a cold leaden
 ‘ shroud :——the one or the other must very short-
 ‘ ly be my portion.—But I depend upon the heaven
 ‘ of your mercy, and hope you will permit me to
 ‘ pour forth the abundance of my soul before you,
 ‘ ——to bask in the sunshine of your smiles, and to
 ‘ try, at least, if no spark of that amorous flame,
 ‘ which burns me up, has darted upon you, and
 ‘ kindled you into soft desires.

‘ O ! if any part of my impatient fires, by se-
 ‘ cret sympathy, should happily have reached your
 ‘ breast,

‘ breast, never was there a pair so transcendently
 ‘ blest as we should be.—The thought is rapture!
 ‘ —extacy too big for words!—too mighty for
 ‘ description!——and I must therefore, for a few
 ‘ hours, defer any further endeavours to convince
 ‘ you,—till when I remain,

‘ Absorbed in the delightful image,

‘ Dear quintessence of joy,

‘ Your most devoted,

‘ Most obsequious,

‘ And most adoring vassal,

‘ F. FINEER.”

In spite of the serious humour Miss Betsey was in, she could not read this without bursting into a violent fit of laughter; but soon composing herself, ‘ If I had not seen the author of this epistle,’ said she, to Mrs. Modely, ‘ I should have thought it had been sent me by some school-boy, and was the first essay of describing a passion he had heard talk of, and was ambitious of being supposed capable of feeling;—but sure,’ continued she, ‘ the man must be either mad, or most impudently vain, to write to me, as if he imagined I was in love with him, and would have him on his first putting the question to me.’

‘ Ah, my dear madam,’ said Mrs. Modely, ‘ do you consider, that a young gentleman of ten thousand a year in possession, as much more in reversion, and the expectation of a coronet, is apt to think he may have any body!——If he does he may find himself mistaken,’ replied Miss Betsey haughtily, and then in the same breath softening her voice, ‘ but are you sure,’ cried she, ‘ that he has so much?’——‘ Sure, madam!’ said Mrs. Modely, ‘ ay, as sure as that I am alive;—I have heard it from twenty people:——they say, he has a house in the country as big as a town,
 ‘ and

‘ and above fifty servants in it ;——but he is but just come to London, and has not had time to settle his equipage as yet, but he has bespoke the finest coach, and the genteelest chariot you ever saw,—all in a new taste, and perfectly French ;——they are quite finished, all but the painting, and that only waits till he knows whether he may quarter your arms or not.’

‘ Bless me !’ cried Miss Betsy, ‘ does he think to gain me in the time of painting a coach ?’ — ‘ Nay, I don’t know,’ answered Mrs. Modely ; ‘ but I think such an offer is not to be trifled with ; ——he is violently in love with you, that is certain :——he does not desire a penny of your fortune, and will settle upon you, notwithstanding, his whole estate, if you require it.’

Miss Betsy made no answer, but paused for a considerable time, and seemed, as it were, in a profound reverie :——at last coming out of it, — ‘ He is for doing things in such a hurry,’ said she ;——‘ I have seen him no more than once, and scarce know what sort of a person he is, — how then can I tell whether I ever shall be able to bring myself to like him or not ?’

‘ You may give him leave to wait on you however,’ cried the other. ——Here Miss Betsy was again silent for some moments ; but Mrs. Modely repeating her request, and enforcing it with some arguments, ——‘ Well then,’ replied she, ‘ I shall not go to church this afternoon, and will see him if he comes ;——but dear Modely,’ continued she, ‘ don’t let him assume on the permission I give him,—tell him, you had all the difficulty in the world to prevail on me to do it ; for, in my mind, he already hopes too much, and fears too little, for a man so prodigiously in love.’ ——

Mrs. Modely on this assured her, she might trust

to her management, and took her leave, very well pleased with the success of her negociation.

We often see the love of grandeur prevail over persons of the ripest years, and knowledge.--What guilty lengths have not some men run to attain it, even among those, who have been esteem'd the wisest, and most honest of their time, when once a title, a bit of ribband crosses their shoulder, or any other gew-gaw trophy of the favour of a court has been hung out, how has their virtue veered and yielded to the temptation?---It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that a young heart, unexperienced in the fallacy of shew, should be dazzled with the tinsel glitter:---the good sense of Miss Betsey made her see, that this last triumph of her charms, was a vain, silly and affected coxcomb; but then this coxcomb had a vast estate, and the enchanting ideas of the figure she should make, if in possession of it, in some moments out-balanced the contempt she had of the owner's person, and understanding.

The glare of pomp and equipage, the pleasure of having it in her power of taking the upper-hand of those of her own rank, and of vying with those of a more exalted one, it is certain had very potent charms for her; but then there was a delicacy in her nature, that would not suffer the desire of attaining it to be altogether predominant:---the thoughts of being sacrificed to a man for whom it was impossible for her to have either love, or esteem;---to be obliged to yield that through duty, which inclination shuddered at, struck a sudden damp to all the rising fires of pride and ambition in her soul, and convinced her, that greatness would be too dearly purchased at the expence of peace.

In fine, she consider'd on these things so long, that she grew weary of considering at all, so resolved to let the matter rest,---give herself no farther pain,---leave to chance the disposal of her fate,
and

and treat all her lovers as she hitherto had done, only as subjects of mere amusement.

She was now beginning to please herself with the thoughts how Mr. Munden, whom she expected that evening, would behave at sight of his new rival, and how Sir Frederick Fineer would bear the presence of a man, whom she was resolved to shew him had the same pretensions as himself;—but tho' she happened to be disappointed in her expectations in this, she did not want other sufficient matter for her diversion.

Sir Frederick, to shew the impatience of his passion, came very soon after dinner;—she received him with as grave an air as she could possibly put on, but it was not in her power, nor indeed would have been in any one's else, to continue it for any long time:—his conversation was much of a piece with his letters, and his actions, even more extravagant.

Never was such an Orlando Furioso in love;—on his first approach, he had indeed the boldness to take one of her hands and put it to his mouth, but afterwards whatever he said to her was on his knees;—he threw himself prostrate on the carpet before her, grasp'd her feet, and alternately kissed each shoe, with the same vehemence, as he could have done her lips, and as much devotion as the pilgrims at Rome do the Pantofle of his Holiness. — Darts! — Flames! — Immortal joys! — Death! — Despair! — Heaven! — Hell! ever-during woe, and all the epithets in the whole vocabulary of Cupid's legend, begun and ended every sentence of his discourse, — This way of entertaining her was so extraordinary, and so new to her, that she could not forbear sometimes returning it with a smile, which, in spite of her endeavours to preserve a serious deportment, diffused a gaiety through all her air.

Those who had told Sir Frederick, that the way
to

to please this lady, was to sooth her vanity, either knew not, or had forgot to inform him, she had also an equal share of good sense ; so that mistaking the change he had observed in her looks for an indication of her being charmed with his manner of behaviour, he acted and re-acted over all his fopperies, and felt as much secret pride in repeating them, as a celebrated singer on the stage does in obeying the voice of an encore.

It is probable, however, that he would have continued in them long enough to have tired Miss Betsy so much, as to have made her give him some demonstrative mark, that the pleasantry he had seen her in proceeded rather from derision than satisfaction, if, divine service being ended, some ladies, as they came from church, had not called to visit her.——The sound of company coming up stairs, obliged him to break off in the middle of a rhapsody, which he, doubtless, thought very fine, and he took his leave somewhat hastily, telling her, the passion with which he was inflamed, was too fierce to be restrained within those bounds which she might expect before witnesses, and that he would wait on her the next day, when he hoped she would be more at liberty to receive his vows.

Eased of the constraint which decency, and the respect which she thought due to his quality, had laid her under while he was there, her natural sprightliness burst with double force.—Mr. Munden, who came in soon after, felt the effects of it :——he indeed enjoyed a benefit he little dreamt of.——The absurd conversation of a rival he as yet knew nothing of, served to make all he said sound more agreeable than ever in the ears of his mistress :——in this excess of good humour she not only made a handsome apology for the treatment he had received at Mrs. Modely's, a thing she had never before vouchsafed to do to any of her lovers, but also

also gave him an invitation to 'squire her to a country dancing, in which she had engaged to make one the ensuing night.

CH A P. IV.

If it were not for some few particulars, might as well be passed over as read.

MISS Betsy, one would think, had now sufficient matter to employ her meditations, on the score of those two lovers, who at present laid close siege to her, neither of whom she was willing to part entirely with, and to retain either she found required some management :—Mr. Munden was beginning to grow impatient at the little progress his long courtship had made on her affections ; and Sir Frederick Fineer, on the other hand, was for bringing things to a conclusion at once :—she was also every day receiving transient addresses from many others, which, though not meant seriously by those that made them, nor taken so by her, served occasionally to fill up any vacuum in her mind ;—yet was it not in the power of love,---gallantry, or any other amusement, to drive the memory of Mr. Truworth wholly out of her head ; which shews, that to a woman of sense, a man of real merit, even though he is not loved, can never be totally indifferent.

But she was at this time more than ordinarily agitated on that gentleman's account ;—she doubted not but her brother Frank, either had, or would shortly have a long conference with him, on the subject of his desisting his visits to her, and could not keep herself from feeling some palpitations for the event ; for though she was not resolved to afford any recompence to his love, she earnestly

wished, he should continue to desire it, and that she might still preserve her former dominion over a heart, which she had always looked upon as the most valuable prize of all that her beauty had ever gained.

Thus unreasonable, and indeed unjust, was she in the affairs of love:—in all others she was humane, benevolent, and kind; but here covetous, even to greediness, of receiving all, without any intention of making the least return. — In fine, the time was not yet come, when she should be capable of being touched with that herself, which she took so much pride to inspire in others.

Though she could not love, she was pleased with being loved:—no man, of what degree or circumstance soever, could offend her by declaring himself her admirer; and as much as she despised Sir Frederick Fineer for his romantic manner of expressing the passion he professed for her, yet to have missed him out of the number of her train of captives, would have been little less mortification to her, than the loss of a favourite lover would have been to some other women.

That enamorado of all enamoratoes, would not, however, suffer the flame, which he flattered himself with having kindled in her, to grow cool, and ambitious also of shewing his talents in verse as well as prose, sent her that morning the following epistle:

‘ To the bright goddess of my soul, the adorable
Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *Most divine source of joy,*

‘ **T**O shew you in what manner I pass the hours
‘ of absence from you, and at the same time
‘ represent the case of a lover racked with suspense,
‘ and

‘ and tossed alternately between hopes and fears, I
‘ take the liberty to inscribe to you the inclosed
‘ poem, which I most humbly beseech you to take
‘ as it is meant, the tribute of my dutious zeal,
‘ —an humble offering presented at the shrine of
‘ your all-glorious beauty, from

‘ Lovely ruler of my heart,

‘ Your eternally devoted,

‘ And no less faithful slave,

‘ F. FINEER.

A true picture of my heart, in the different stages of its worship.

A

P O E M,

Most humbly inscribed to the never-
enough deified

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

WHEN first from my unfinish'd sleep I start,
I feel a flutt'ring faintness round my heart;
A darksome mist, which rises from my mind,
And like sweet sun-shine, leaves your name
behind.

When from your shadow to yourself I fly,
To drink in transport at my thirsty eye,
Each orb surveys you with a kindling sight,
And trembles to sustain the vast delight :
From head to foot, o'er all your heav'n they
stray,

Dazzled with lustre in your milky way :
At last you speak, and, as I start to hear,
My soul is all collected in my ear.

But when resistless transport makes me bold,
And your soft hand inclosed in mine I hold,
Then flooding raptures swim through ev'ry vein,
And each swol'n art'ry throbs with pleasing pain.
Fain

- ' Fain would I snatch you to my longing arms,
 ' And grasp in extacy your blazing charms :
 ' O then,---how vain the wish that I pursue !
 ' I would lose all myself, and mix with you :
 ' Involv'd,---embody'd, with your beauties join,
 ' As fires meet fires, and mingle in their shine ;
 ' Aborb'd in bliss, I would dissolving lie,
 ' Become all you, and soul and body die.
 ' Weigh well these symptoms, and then judge,
 ' in part,
 ' The poignant anguish of the bleeding heart
 ' Of him, who is, with unutterable love, resplen-
 ' dent charmer,
 ' Your hoping,--fearing, languishing adorer,
 F. FINEER.
- ' P. S. I propose flying to the feet of my adorable
 ' about five o'clock this afternoon ;---do not,
 ' I beseech you, clip the wings of my devotion,
 ' by forbidding my approach.'

How acceptable to a vain mind, is even the meanest testimony of admiration !---If Miss Betsy was not charmed with the elegance of this offering, she was, at least, very well pleased with the pains he took in composing it.---In the humour she then was, she would perhaps have rewarded the labour of his brain, with giving him an opportunity of kissing her shoe a second time, but she expected her brother Frank about the hour he mentioned, with some intelligence of Mr. Truworth, and had engaged to pass the evening abroad, as has been already mentioned.

She sent, however, a very complaisant message by the servant, who brought the letter ;---she ordered he should come up into her dining-room, and then, with a great deal of sweetness, desired him to tell his master, that she was under a necessity of spending the whole day with some relations, that

were just come to town, therefore intreated he would defer the honour he intended her, 'till some other time.

Mr. Francis Thoughtless did indeed call upon her, as she imagined he would;—he had been at the lodgings of Mr. Truworth, but that gentleman happened to be abroad at the time he went, and he was now obliged to go with his brother on some business relating to the commission he was about to purchase, so could not stay long enough with her to enter into any conversation of moment.

Miss Betsey had now full two hours upon her hands after her brother left her, to which she had appointed Mr. Munden to come to conduct her to the country-dancing, and as she had not seen Miss Mabel for a good while, and had heard that lady had made her several visits when she was not at home to receive them, she thought to take this opportunity of having nothing else to do, to return part of the debt, which civility demanded from her to her friend.---Accordingly she set out in a hackney coach, but met with an accident by the way, which not only disappointed her intentions, but likewise struck a strange damp on the gaiety of her spirits.

As they were driving pretty fast thro' a narrow street, a gentleman's chariot run full against them, with such rapidity, that both received a very great shock, insomuch that the wheels were locked, and it was not without some difficulty, and the assistance of several people, who seeing what had happened ran out of their shops and houses, that the coachmen were able to keep their horses from going on; which had they done, both the machines must inevitably have been torn to pieces:—there were too gentlemen in the chariot, who immediately jumped out;—Miss Betsey screaming, and frighted almost to death, was also helped out of the coach

coach by a very civil tradesman, before whose door the accident had happened ;——he led her into his shop, and made her sit down, while his wife ran to fetch a glass of water, and some hartshorn drops.

Her extreme terror had hindered her from discovering who was in the chariot, or whether any one was there, but the gentlemen having crossed the way, and come into the same shop, she presently knew the one to be Sir Basil Loveit, and the other Mr. Truworth ; her surprize at the sight of the latter was such as might have occasioned some raillery, if it had not been concealed under that which she had sustained before :——Sir Basil approached her with a respectful bow, and made a handsome apology for the fault his man had committed, in not giving way when a lady was in the coach ; to which she modestly replied, that there could be no fault where there was no design of offending.——Mr. Truworth then drawing near, with a very cold and reserved air told her, he hoped she would receive no prejudice by the accident.

‘ I believe the danger is now over,’ said she, struck to the very heart at finding herself accosted by him in a manner so widely different from that to which she had been accustomed : ——scarce had she the fortitude to bear the shock it gave her ; but summoning to her aid all that pride and disdain could supply her with, to prevent him from perceiving how much she was affected by his behaviour :--- I ‘ could not, however,’ pursued she, with a tone of voice perfectly ironical, ‘ have expected to receive ‘ any consolation under this little disaster from Mr. ‘ Truworth ;—I imagined, Sir, that some weeks ‘ ago you had been reposing yourself in the delightful bowers, and sweet recesses of your country seat.—How often have I heard you repeat with pleasure these lines of Mr. Addison ?

“ Bear

“ Bear me, ye gods ! to Umbria’s gentle seats,

“ Or hide me in sweet Bayia’s soft retreats.

‘ Yet still I find you in this noisy, bustling town.’—She concluded these words with a forced smile ; which Mr. Truworth taking no notice of, replied, with the same gravity as before, ‘ I purposed indeed, madam, to have returned to Oxfordshire, but events then unforeseen have detained me.’

While they were speaking, Sir Basil recollecting the face of Miss Betsey, which till now he had not done, cried, ‘ I think, madam, I have had the honour of seeing you before this.’——‘ Yes, Sir Basil,’ replied she, knowing very well he meant at Miss Forward’s, ‘ you saw me once in a place, where neither you, nor any one else, will ever see me again, but I did not then know the character of the person I visited :’ To which Sir Basil only replying, that he believed she did not, Mr. Truworth immediately rejoined, that the most cautious might be *once* deceived.

The emphasis with which he uttered the word once, made Miss Betsey see, that he bore still in mind the second error she had been guilty of, in visiting that woman ; but she had no time to give any other answer than a look of scorn and indignation, Sir Basil’s footman telling him, the chariot was now at liberty, and had received no damage ; on which the gentlemen took their leave of her, Mr. Truworth shewing no more concern in doing so, than Sir Basil himself, or any one would have done, who never had more than a mere cursory acquaintance with her.

She would not be persuaded to go into the coach again, much less could she think of going on her intended visit, but desired a chair to be called, and went directly home, in order to give vent to those emotions,

emotions, which may easier be conceived than represented.

CHAP. V.

Seems to be calculated rather for the instruction than entertainment of the reader.

HOW great soever was the shock Miss Betsy had sustained in this interview with Mr. Truworth, neither did he think himself much indebted to fortune, for having thrown her in his way;—he had once loved her to a very high degree, and though the belief of her unworthiness,—the fond endearments of one woman,—and the real merits of another, had all contributed to drive that passion from his breast, yet as a wound but lately closed is apt to bleed afresh, on every little accident, so there required no less than the whole stock of the beautiful and discreet Miss Harriot's perfections, to defend his heart from feeling anew some part of its former pain, on this sudden and unexpected attack.

Happy was it for him, that his judgment concurred with his present inclination, and that he had such unquestionable reasons for justifying the transition he had made of his affections from one object to another, else might he have relapsed into a flame, which, if ever it had been attended with any true felicity, must have been purchased at the expence of an infinity of previous disquiets.

He was now become extremely conversant with the family of Sir Basil,——visited there almost every day.——was well received by both the sisters, and had many opportunities of penetrating into the real sentiments and dispositions of Miss Harriot, which he found to be such as his most sanguine wishes could have formed for the woman to be blest with,

with, whom he would make choice of for a wife.— When he compared the steady temper,——the affability,——the easy, unaffected chearfulness, mixed with a becoming reserve, which that young lady testified in all her words and actions, with the capricious turns,——the pride,——the giddy lightness he had observed in the behaviour of Miss Betsy, his admiration of the one was increased by his disapprobation of the other.

How great a pity was it, therefore, that a young lady, like Miss Betsy, so formed by heaven and nature to have rendered any man compleatly happy in possessing her, inferior to her fair competitor, neither in wit, beauty, or any personal, or acquired endowment,——her inclinations no less pure,——her sentiments as noble——her disposition equally generous and benign, should, through her own inadvertency, destroy all the merit of so many amiable qualities, and for the sake of indulging the wanton vanity of attracting universal admiration, forfeit, in reality, those just pretensions to it, which otherwise she had been entitled from the deserving and discerning few !

Mr. Truworth, as the reader may have observed, did not all at once withdraw his affections from the first object of them, nor transmit them to a second, but on very justifiable motives.— The levity of Miss Betsy, and other branches of ill conduct, had very much weaned her from his heart, before the wicked artifices of Miss Flora had rendered her quite contemptible in his opinion, and had not wholly devoted himself to the beauties of Miss Harriot, 'till he was well convinced the perfections of her mind were such as could not fail of securing the conquest which her eyes had gained.

He did not however presently declare himself ;— he saw the friendship between the two sisters would be somewhat of an obstacle to his hopes ;—— he
had

had heard that Miss Harriot had rejected several advantageous proposals of marriage, merely because she would not be separated from Mrs. Wellair ;--- he also found, that Sir Basil, though for what reason he could not guess, seemed not very desirous of having his sister disposed of :---the only probable way therefore, he thought of obtaining his wishes, was to conceal them, 'till he found the means of insinuating himself so far into the good graces, both of the one and the other, as to prevent them from opposing whatever endeavours he should make to engage their sister to listen to his suit.

The stratagem had all the effect for which it was put in practice :---the intimacy he had long ago contracted with Sir Basil, now grew into so perfect a friendship, that he scarce suffered a day to pass without an invitation to this house.---Mrs. Wellair expressed the highest esteem and liking of his conversation, and Miss Harriot herself, not imagining of what consequence every word that fell from her was to him, said a thousand obliging things on his account, particularly one day, after they had been singing a two-part song together, 'How often,' cried she to her sister, 'shall we wish for this gentleman, when we get into the country, to act 'the principal part in our operas !'

All this he returned in no other manner, than any man would have done, who had no farther aim than to shew his wit and gallantry :---so much of his happiness, indeed, depended upon the event, that it behoved him to be very cautious how he proceeded ; and it is likely he would not have ventured to throw off the mask of indifference so soon as he did, if he had not been emboldened to it by an unexpected accident.

Among the number of those, who visited the sisters of Sir Basil, there was a young lady called Mrs. Blanchfield ;--she was born in the same town with

with them, but had been some time in London, on account of the death of an uncle, who had left her a large fortune ; --she had a great deal of vivacity and good humour, which rendered both her person and conversation very agreeable ; --she passed in the eyes of most people for a beauty, but her charms were little taken notice of by Mr. Truworth, though she behaved towards him in a manner, which would have been flattering enough to a man of more vanity, or who had been less engrossed by the perfection of another.

By what odd means does Fortune sometimes bring about those things she is determined to accomplish ? -- Who could have thought this lady, with whom Mr. Truworth had no manner of concern, and but a slight acquaintance, should even unknowing it herself, become the happy instrument of having that done for him, which he knew not very well how to contrive for himself ; -- yet so it proved, in effect, as the reader will presently perceive.

Happening to call one morning on Sir Basil while he was dressing, ‘ O ! Truworth,’ said he, ‘ I am glad you have prevented me ; for I was just going to your lodgings : -- I have something to acquaint you with, which I fancy you will think deserves your attention. --- I suppose,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘ you would not tell me any thing, that was not really so ; -- but pray what is it ?’

‘ Why you have made a conquest here it seems,’ resumed Sir Basil, ‘ and may say with Cæsar, ‘ Veni, Vidi, Vici,’ --- Prithee how did you sleep last night ? -- Did your guardian angel, or no kind tatling star, give you notice of your approaching happiness, that you might receive the blessing with moderation ?’ --- Mr. Truworth, not able to conceive what it was he meant, but imagining there was some mystery contained in this railery,

‘military, desired him to explain; ‘for,’ said he, ‘the happiness you promise cannot come too soon.’

‘You will think so,’ replied Sir Basil, ‘when I tell you, a fine lady,—a celebrated toast, and a fortune of twenty thousand pounds in her own hands, is fallen in love with you.’——‘With me?’ cried Mr. Truworth, ‘you are merry this morning, Sir Basil.’——‘No faith, I am serious,’ resumed the other; ‘the lady I speak of is Mrs. Blanchfield:—I have heard her say abundance of handsome things of you myself,—such as, that you were a very fine gentleman,—that you had a great deal of wit,—sung well;—but my sisters tell me, that when she is alone with them, she asks a thousand questions about you, and in fine talks of nothing else;—so that, according to this account, a very little courtship would serve to make you master both of her person and fortune—What say you?’

‘That I am neither vain enough to believe,’ answered Mr. Truworth, ‘nor ambitious enough to desire such a thing should be real.’——‘How!’——cried Sir Basil, in some surprise;---‘why she is reckoned one of the finest women in town;---has wit,---good nature,---is of a good family, and an unblemished reputation;---then her fortune,---though I know your estate sets you above wanting a fortune with a wife, yet I must tell you a fortune is a very pretty thing,---children may come, and a younger brood must be provided for.’

‘You argue very reasonably indeed,’ replied Mr. Truworth; ‘but pray,’ pursued he, ‘as you are so sensible of this lady’s perfections, how happened it, that you never made your addresses to her yourself?’---‘I was not sure she would like me

‘ so well as she does you,’ said he ; ‘ besides, to
 ‘ let you into the secret, my heart was engaged be-
 ‘ fore I ever saw her face, and my person had been
 ‘ so too by this time, but for an unlucky rub in
 ‘ my way.’

‘ What ! Sir Basil, honourably in love,’ cried
 Mr. Truworth.---‘ Aye, Charles, there is no re-
 ‘ sisting destiny,’ answered he ; ---‘ I that have
 ‘ ranged through half the sex in search of pleasure,
 ‘ ---doated on the beauty of one,---the wit of
 ‘ another, admired by turns their different charms,
 ‘ have at last found one in whom all I could wish
 ‘ in woman is compriz’d ; and to whom I am un-
 ‘ alterably fixed, beyond even, I think, a possibility
 ‘ of change.’

‘ May I be trusted with the name of this admi-
 ‘ rable person,’ said Mr. Truworth, ‘ and what
 ‘ impedes your happiness ?’---‘ You shall know
 ‘ all,’ replied Sir Basil ; ---‘ in the first place, she
 ‘ is called Miss Mabel.’---‘ What ! Miss Mabel
 ‘ of Bury-street,’ cried Mr. Truworth hastily ?
 ---‘ The same,’ replied Sir Basil : ---‘ you know
 ‘ her then ?’---‘ I have seen her,’ said Mr. True-
 ‘ worth, in company with a lady I visited some
 ‘ time ago, and believe she is, in reality, the
 ‘ original of that amiable picture you have been
 ‘ drawing.’

‘ It rejoices me, however, that you approve
 ‘ my choice,’ said Sir Basil ; ‘ but her father is,
 ‘ without exception, the most sordid, avaritious
 ‘ wretch breathing ;---he takes more pleasure in
 ‘ counting over his bags, than in the happiness of
 ‘ an only child ;---he seems glad of an alliance with
 ‘ me,---encourages my pretensions to his daughter,
 ‘ ---is ready to give her to me to-morrow if I
 ‘ please ; yet refuses to part with a single shilling
 ‘ for

‘ for her portion, till he can no longer keep it ; --
 ‘ that is, he will secure to me ten thousand pounds
 ‘ after his decease ; and adds, by way of cajole,
 ‘ that, perhaps, he will then throw in a better pen-
 ‘ ny ; but is positively determined to make no di-
 ‘ minution of his substance, while he lives. —
 ‘ These,’ continued he, ‘ are the only terms on
 ‘ which he will give his consent, and this it is, which
 ‘ has so long delayed my marriage.’

Mr. Truworth could not here forbear making
 some reflections on the cruelty and injustice of these
 parents, who rather than divide any part of their
 treasures with their children, suffer them to let slip
 the only crisis that could make their happiness.
 — After which, Sir Basil went on in his dis-
 course.

‘ It is not,’ said he, ‘ that I would not gladly
 ‘ accept my charming girl on the conditions the
 ‘ old miser offers, or even without any future hopes
 ‘ of what he promises to do for her ; but I am so
 ‘ unhappily circumstanced as to be under a necessity
 ‘ of having ready money with a wife : — old Sir
 ‘ Basil, my father, gave my elder sister six thou-
 ‘ sand pounds on her marriage with Mr. Wellair,
 ‘ and, I suppose to shew his affection to both his
 ‘ daughters was equal, bequeathed at his death the
 ‘ same sum to Harriot, and this to be charged on
 ‘ the estate, notwithstanding it was then under some
 ‘ other incumbrances : — she can make her demand,
 ‘ either on coming of age, or on the day of marri-
 ‘ age, which ever happens first ; the one indeed is
 ‘ three years distant, she being but eighteen, but
 ‘ who knows how soon the other may happen ? —
 ‘ ’Tis true, she seems at present quite averse to
 ‘ changing her condition ; but that is not to be de-
 ‘ pended upon, — all young women are apt to

‘ talk in that strain ; but when once the favourite
 ‘ man comes in view, away at once with resolution
 ‘ and virginity.’

Mr. Truworth now ceased to wonder at the little satisfaction Sir Basil had shewn, on any discourse that casually happened concerning love or marriage to Miss Harriot ; and nothing could be more lucky for him than this discovery of the cause,——he found by it that one obstacle, at least, to his hopes might easily be removed, and that it was in his own power to convert entirely to his interest, that which had seemed to threaten the greatest opposition to it.

A moment’s consideration sufficed to make him know what he ought to do, and that a more favourable conjuncture could not possibly arrive, for his declaring the passion he had so long concealed : —
 ‘ Methinks, Sir Basil,’ said he, after a very short pause, ‘ there is not the least grounds for any apprehensions of the inconvenience you mention :
 ‘ ——whoever has in view the possession of Miss
 ‘ Harriot, must certainly be too much taken up with
 ‘ his approaching happiness to think of any thing
 ‘ besides.’

‘ Ah friend,’ cried Sir Basil, ‘ you talk like
 ‘ one ignorant of the world.’ —— I talk like one
 ‘ who truly loves,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘ and
 ‘ is not ignorant of the merit of her he loves ; —
 ‘ and now,’ continued he, perceiving Sir Basil looked a little surpris’d, ‘ I will exchange secrets with
 ‘ you, and for the one you have repos’d in me, will
 ‘ entrust you with another, which has never yet escap’d my lips :—I love your charming sister ; —
 ‘ the first moment I beheld her, made me her ador-
 ‘ er ; ——her affability, ——her modest sweetness,
 ‘ ——her unaffected wit, ——her prudence, ——
 ‘ the

‘ the thousand virtues of her mind have since confirmed the expressions that her beauty made, and I am now all her’s.’

As Sir Basil had never discovered any thing in Mr. Truworth’s behaviour, that could give him the least cause to suspect what now he was so fully informed of by his own confession, he was very much astonished, ‘ Is it possible !’ cried he, ‘ are you in earnest, and do you really love Harriot ?’ — ‘ Yes, from my soul I do,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘ and with no other blessing this side heaven than to obtain her :—as to the fix thousand pound you speak of, I neither should demand, nor would accept it, ’till well assured the payment of it was quite agreeable to the situation of your affairs.’

‘ Would you then marry Harriot with nothing,’ said Sir Basil, ‘ or what is tantamount to nothing, a small fortune, and that to be paid discretionary, rather than Mrs. Blanchfield with twenty thousand pounds in ready specie ?’ — Not only rather than Mrs. Blanchfield,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘ but than any other woman in the world, with all those thousands multiplied into millions.’

‘ Amazing love and generosity !’ cried Sir Basil with some vehemence ; --- ‘ could she be capable of refusing, she were unworthy of you ; ---but this you may be assured of, that if all the influence I have over her can engage her to be yours, she shall be so.’ --- Mr. Truworth could testify the transport this promise gave him no otherwise than by a warm embrace, saying, at the same time, ‘ Dear, Sir Basil ! --- ‘ Yes,’ rejoined that gentleman, ‘ to give my sister such a husband as Mr. Truworth, -I would put myself to a much greater inconvenience than the prompt pay-

‘ment of her fortune; and shall not abuse your
 ‘generous offer by---’ ‘I will not hear a word
 ‘on that head,’ cried Mr. Truworth, hastily in-
 ‘terrupting him, ‘and if you would add to the
 ‘favours you have already conferred upon me,
 ‘do not even think of it :---pursue your inclina-
 ‘tions with the deserving object of them, and be
 ‘as happy with her as I hope to be through your
 ‘friendly assistance with the adorable Miss Har-
 ‘riot.’

Here ensued a little contest between them ;
 ——— Sir Basil was ashamed to accept that
 proof of friendship Mr. Truworth proffered,
 but the many arguments he made use of, joined
 to the consideration of his own ease, at last pre-
 vailed ; after which Sir Basil told him, the ladies
 were gone to the shops, in order to make some
 purchases they wanted, but that he would take
 the first opportunity on their return, to ac-
 quaint his sister with the sentiments he had for
 her, and appointed to meet him at the chocolate-
 house in the evening, to let him know the suc-
 cess.

C H A P. VI.

Shews the different operations of the same passion, in persons of different principles and dispositions.

SIR Basil had very much at heart the accomplishment of the promise he had made to Mr. Truworth, and indeed no one thing could have seemed more strange than that of his being otherwise, when so many reasons concurred to engage his integrity : ——— he had a real friendship for the person, who desired his assistance, there was none among all his acquaintance for whom he had a greater regard, or who shared more of his good wishes ; ——— the natural affection he had for his sister made him rejoice in the opportunity of seeing her so happily disposed of, and the particular interest of his own passion, might well render him not only sincere, but also zealous in promoting an affair, which would so fully answer all these ends.

The first breaking the matter to Miss Harriot he looked upon as the greatest difficulty ; for he doubted not but when once a belief of Mr. Truworth's inclinations was properly inculcated in her, his amiable person, and fine qualities, would enable him to make his way, as a lover, into a heart, which had already a high esteem for him as an acquaintance.

He resolved, however, not to delay making the discovery, and his sisters coming home soon after, he ran out of his dressing-room, and met them as they were going up stairs into their own chamber, with a whole cargo of silks, and other things they had been buying : ——— ‘ Hold, hold,’ cried he, not suffering them to pass, ‘ pray come in here, and let me see what bargains you have been making ?’

‘making?’ — ‘What understanding can you, that are a batchelor, have in these things?’ said Mrs. Wellair, laughing. — ‘I have the more need then of being informed,’ replied he, ‘that I may be the better able to judge both of the fancy and frugality of my wife, whenever I am so happy to get one.’

‘Well, well, I know all you men must be humoured,’ said Mrs. Wellair, in the same gay strain: — ‘come, sister, let us unpack our bundles.’ — With these words they both went in, and the servant who followed them with the things, having laid them down on a table, withdrew.

The ladies then began to open their parcels, and Sir Basil gave his opinion first of one thing, and then of another, as they were shewn to him, ‘till Miss Harriot displaying a roll of very rich white damask, ‘to which of you does this belong?’ said Sir Basil.---‘To me,’ answered she.---‘Hah! --- I am glad on it, upon my soul,’ rejoined he: ‘this is an omen of marriage, my dear sister:---I will lay my life upon it, that you become a bride in this gown.’---‘I must first find the man to make me so, cried she briskly.---‘He is not very far to seek, I dare answer,’ said Sir Basil.---‘Why then,’ replied she, ‘when he is found he must wait till my mind comes to me, and that I believe, will not be in the wearing of this gown.’

‘I am of a different way of thinking,’ said he, somewhat more gravely than before;---‘what would you say if I should tell you, that one of the finest, most accomplished men in Europe is fallen desperately in love with you, and has engaged me to be his intercessor?’---‘I should say nothing,’ answered she, ‘but that you have a mind to divert yourself, and put me out of humour with my
new

‘ new gown, by your converting it into a hieroglyphic.---In speaking these words she caught up her silk, and ran hastily up stairs, leaving Mrs. Wellair and her brother together.

‘ Poor Harriot,’ said Sir Basil, after she was gone, ‘ I have put her to the blush with the very name of matrimony ;—but I assure you, sister,’ continued he to Mrs. Wellair, ‘ the thing I have mentioned is serious.’——‘ Indeed !’ cried that lady in some surprise.——‘ Yes, upon my honour,’ resumed he, ‘ the gentleman I mean had not left me above a quarter of an hour before you came in, and I can tell you is one whom you know.’——‘ If I know him,’ replied she, after a pause, ‘ I fancy I need not be at any loss to guess his name, by the description you have given me of him ; for I have seen no man since my coming to town, who so well deserves those encomiums as Mr. Truworth.’——‘ I am glad you think so,’ said Sir Basil ; ‘ for I am certain your judgment will go a great way with Harriot ;——he is, in fact, the person I have been speaking of, and is so every way deserving of my sister’s affection, that she must not only be the most insensible creature in the world, but also the greatest enemy to her own interest and happiness, to refuse him.’

He then repeated to her all the conversation he had that morning with Mr. Truworth, the answers that gentleman had given him to the proposition he had made on Mrs. Blanchfield’s account ;——his declaration of his passion for Miss Harriot, and every other particular, excepting that of the non-payment of her fortune ; and that he concealed only because he would not be suspected to have been bribed by it, to say more of his friend than he really merited.

Mrs. Wellair was equally charmed and astonished at this report, and on Sir Basil’s telling her, that Mr. Truworth was under some apprehensions, that

that the pleasure she took in having her sister with her, would be an impediment to his desires, she very gravely replied, that she was very sorry Mr. Truworth should imagine, she was so wanting in understanding, or true affection to her sister, as for the self-satisfaction of her company, to offer any thing in opposition to her interest or happiness.

After this they had a good deal of discourse together, concerning Mr. Truworth's family and fortune, the particulars of both which Sir Basil was very well acquainted with, and Mrs. Wellair being thoroughly convinced by what he said of the many advantages of the alliance proposed, assured him, in the strongest terms she was able, that she would do every thing in her power to promote it.

‘ I'll entertain her on this subject while we are dressing,’ said she ;——‘ your pleasantry on the white damask will furnish me with an excellent pretence ;——I shall begin in the same strain you did, and then proceed to a serious narrative of all you have been telling me, relating to Mr. Truworth ; to which I shall add my own sentiments of the amiableness of his person, parts, and accomplishments, and set before her eyes, in the light it deserves, the generosity of his passion, in refusing so great a fortune as Mrs. Blanchfield for her sake, and the respectfulness of it, in not daring to declare himself, till he had engaged the only two, who may be supposed to have any influence over her, in favour of his suit.’

‘ I know,’ said Sir Basil, ‘ that you women are the fittest to deal with one another,—therefore, as I see you are hearty in the cause, shall wholly depend on your management ;—but hearkye, sister,’ continued he, perceiving she was going out of the room, ‘ I have one thing to add,—I am to meet Truworth at the chocolate-house this evening ; —he will be impatient for the success of the pro-
mise

‘mise I have made him;—now you know we shall have a great deal of company at dinner to day, and I may not have an opportunity of speaking to you in private before the time of my going to him;—for that reason we must have some watch word between us, that may give an intimation in general, how Harriot receives what you have said to her.

‘Oh, that is easy,’ cried Mrs. Wellair, as thus, —you shall take an occasion, either at table, or any time when you find it most proper, to ask me, how I do? and by my answer to that question, you will be able to judge what success I have had.’——‘Very right,’ replied Sir Basil, ‘and I will be sure to observe.’—There passed no more between them, she went directly up stairs to do as she had said, and Sir Basil to pay his morning visit to Miss Mabel, as he usually did every day.

The humours of these two worthy persons, were extremely well adapted to make each other happy :---Sir Basil was gay, but he was perfectly sincere ;---Miss Mabel had a great deal of softness in her nature, but it was entirely under the direction of her prudence ;---she returned the passion of her lover with equal tenderness, yet would not permit the gratification of it, ’till every thing that threatened an interruption of their mutual ease should be removed. --- Sir Basil made no secret of his affairs to her ; --- she knew very well, that he desired no more at present of her father than the six thousand pounds, charged on his estate for Miss Harriot’s fortune, and as the old gentleman testified the highest esteem for him, and satisfaction in the proposed match, she flattered herself, that he would at last consent to so reasonable a request, but, till he did so, remained firm in her resolution of denying both her own, and lover’s wishes.

The

The pleasure with which they always saw each other, was now however greatly enhanced by his acquainting her with the almost assured hope he had, that the difficulty, which had so long kept them asunder, would be soon got over, and he should have the inexpressible satisfaction of complying with the conditions her father had proposed, without the least danger of incurring any inconvenience to himself.

The clock striking two, he was obliged to leave her, and go home to receive the company he expected ;---he behaved among his friends with his accustomed vivacity, but casting his eyes frequently towards Miss Harriot, he imagined he saw a certain gloom upon her countenance, which made him fearful for the effect of Mrs. Wellair's sollicitations, till recollecting the agreement between him and that lady, he cried out hastily to her, ' How do you do, sister ? ' To which she answered, with a smile, ' As well as can be expected, brother ; ' ---and then to prevent Miss Harriot, or any one else from wondering what she meant by so odd a reply, added, ' after the ugly jolt I have had this morning over London stones in a hackney coach.'

Sir Basil easily understood, that by the words, ' As well as can be expected,' his sister meant as much as could be hoped for, from the first attack on a maid so young and innocent, as Miss Harriot, and doubted not but that so favourable a beginning would have as fortunate a conclusion.

Those guests who had dined with him, stayed supper also, but that did not hinder him from fulfilling his engagement with Mr. Truworth ;---he begged they would excuse a short excursion, which he said he was obliged to make, on extraordinary business, and accordingly went at the time appointed for the meeting that gentleman.

Mr. Truworth received the intelligence he brought him, with transports befitting the sincerity of his passion; — he thought he had little to apprehend, since Mrs. Wellair vouchsafed to become his advocate. — ‘It is certainly,’ said sir Basil, ‘greatly in her power to forward the completion of your wishes, as it was to have obstructed them; — but, my dear friend,’ continued he, ‘there is no time to be lost: — the business that brought my sisters to town will soon be over, and Mrs. Wellair will then be on the wing to get home to her husband and family; — you must dine with me to-morrow; — I shall be able by that time to learn the particulars of Harriot’s behaviour, on her first hearing an account of the affection with which you honour her, and by that you may the better judge how to proceed. This was the substance of all the discourse they had together at that time; — sir Basil went home, and Mr. Truworth adjourned to a coffee-house, where he met with something not very pleasing to him. — It was a letter from Miss Flora, containing these lines:

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘*My dear Truworth,*
 ‘**F**OR such you still are, and ever must be to my fond doating heart, though I have too much cause to fear you cease to wish it; — else why this cruel absence? — I have not seen you these three days! — an age to one that loves like me. — I am racked to death with the apprehensions of the motives of so unexpected a neglect; — if my person or passion were unworthy your regard, why did you accept them with such enchanting softness? — and if I ever had any place in your affection, what have I
 VOL. II. F done

‘done to forfeit it? — But sure you cannot think
 ‘of abandoning me! — of leaving me to all the
 ‘horrors of despair and shame! — No, — ’tis
 ‘impossible, — ingratitude consists not with that
 ‘strict honour you pretend to, and that I still flat-
 ‘ter myself you are in reality possessed of: —
 ‘you may have had some business, — but how
 ‘poor a thing is business when compared with
 ‘love! And I may reply with our English Sappho,
 ‘pho, in one of her amorous epistles,

‘Business you feign, but did you love like me,
 ‘I should your most important business be.’

‘But whither does my hurrying spirits trans-
 ‘port me? — If I am still so happy to retain
 ‘any share of your heart, I have said too much;
 ‘if I am not, all I can say will be ineffectual to
 ‘move you. — I shall therefore only tell you, that
 ‘I can live no longer without seeing you, and
 ‘will call on you at the coffee-house this evening
 ‘about eight, till when I am,

‘Though in the utmost distraction,

‘My dear, dear Truworth,

‘Your passionately tender,

‘And devoted servant,

‘F. MELLASIN.’

‘P. S. Having heard you say letters were left for
 ‘you at this place, and that you stepped in
 ‘once or twice every day, I thought it more
 ‘proper to direct for you here, than at your
 ‘own lodgings. — Once more adieu. — Do not
 ‘fail to meet me at the hour.’

Scarce could the ghost of a forsaken mistress,
 drawing his curtains at the dead of night, have
 shacked Mr. Truworth more than this epistle;
 — he had indeed done no more than any man,
 of his age and constitution would have done, if
 tempted in the manner he had been, yet he re-
 proached

proached himself severely for it: — he knew how little this unhappy creature had her passions in subjection, and though all the liking he ever had for her was now swallowed up in his honourable affections for Miss Harriot, yet he was too humane and too generous not to pity the extravagance of a flame he was no longer capable of returning; — he wanted her to know there was a necessity for their parting, but knew not how to do it without driving her to extremes: — he hated all kind of dissimulation, and as neither his honour, nor his inclination, would permit him to continue an amorous correspondence with her, he was very much at a loss how to put an end to it, without letting her into the real cause, which as yet he thought highly improper to do.

It cost him some time in debating within himself how he should behave, in an affair which was indeed, in the present situation of his heart, pretty perplexing; — he considered miss Flora as a woman of condition, — as one who tenderly loved him, and as one, who on both these accounts, it would not become him to affront; — he reflected also, that a woman who had broke through all the rules of virtue, modesty, and even common decency for the gratification of her wild desires, might, when denied that gratification, be capable of taking such steps as might not only expose her own character, but with it so much of his, as might ruin him with Miss Harriot; — he found it therefore highly necessary to disguise his sentiments, and act towards her in such a manner as should wean her affections from him by degrees, without his seeming to intend, or wish for such an event.

He had but just come to this determination when he was told from the bar, that a lady in a hackney coach desired to speak with him; — he went directly to her, but instead of ordering the

man to drive to any particular house, bid him drive as slowly as he could round St. James's square.

This very much startling her, she asked him what he meant? — 'Are all the houses of entertainment in the town,' said she, 'shut up, that we must talk to one another in the street?' — 'It is impossible for me, madam,' answered he, 'to have the pleasure of your company this evening, — I am engaged with some gentlemen at the house where you found me, and have given my promise to return in ten minutes.' — These words, and the reserved tone in which he spoke them, stabbed her to the heart, — 'Ungrateful man!' cried she, 'is it thus you repay the most tender and ardent passion that ever was?' — 'You ladies,' said he, 'when once you give way to the soft impulse, are apt to devote yourselves too much to it; but men have a thousand other amusements, which all claim a share in the variegated scenes of life; — I am sorry, therefore, to find you disquieted in the manner your letter intimates. — Love should be nursed by laughing, ease, and joy; sour discontent, reproaches, and complaints, deform its native beauty, and render that a curse, which otherwise would be the greatest of our blessings. — I beg you, therefore,' continued he, with somewhat more softness in his voice, 'for your own sake, to moderate this vehemence; — be assured I will see you as often as possible, and shall always think of you with the regard I ought to do.'

Perceiving she was in very great agonies, he threw his arms about her waist, and gave her a very affectionate salute, which, though no more than what a brother might have offered to a sister, a little mitigated the force of her grief: — 'I see I am undone,' cried she; — 'I have lost your heart,

‘heart, and am the most wretched creature upon earth!’ — ‘Do not say so,’ replied he; — ‘I never can be ungrateful for the favours you have bestowed upon me; but discretion ought to be observed in an amour such as our’s: — I have really some affairs upon my hands, which for a time will very much engross me, — make yourself easy then, — resume that gaiety, which renders you so agreeable to the world, and depend upon it, that to make me happy you must be so yourself.’ — ‘When then shall I see you,’ cried she, still weeping and hanging on his breast? ‘As soon as convenience permits I will send to you,’ said he, ‘but there is a necessity for my leaving you at present.’

He then called to the coachman to drive back to the house where he had taken him up. — It is not to be doubted but she made use of all the rhetoric of desperate dying love, and every other art she was mistress of, to engage him to prefix some time for their meeting; but he would not suffer himself to be prevailed upon so far, and he left her with no other consolation than a second embrace, little warmer than the former had been, and a repetition of the promise he had made of writing to her in a short time.

C H A P. VII.

May be called an appendix to the former, as it contains only some passages subsequent to the preceding occurrences.

WHAT pain soever the good nature and generosity of Mr. Trueworth had made him suffer, at sight of the unfortunate Miss Flora’s distress, it was dissipated by recalling to his mind the pleasing idea Sir Basil had inspired in him, of

succeeding in his wishes with the amiable Miss Harriot.

What sleep he had that night, doubtless, presented him with nothing but the delightful images of approaching joys, and, possibly, might give him some intimation of what was in those moments doing for him, by those who were waking for his interest.

Mrs. Wellair, who was extremely cautious how she undertook any thing, without being fully convinced it was right, and no less industrious in accomplishing whatever she had once undertaken, had employed all the time she had, with her sister before dinner, in representing to her, in the most pathetic terms, the passion Mr. Truworth had for her, — the extraordinary merits he was possessed of, and the many advantages of an alliance with him; but Miss Harriot was modest to that excess, that to be told, though from the mouth of a sister, she had inspired any inclinations of the sort she mentioned, gave her the utmost confusion; — she had not considered the differences of sexes, and could not bear that any thing in her had reminded others of it, without blushing: — the effects of her beauty gave her rather a painful than a pleasing sensation, and she was ready to die with shame at what the most part of women are studious to acquire, and look on as their greatest glory.

She offered nothing, however, in opposition to what Mrs. Wellair had said, concerning the person, or amiable qualities of Mr. Truworth; neither indeed had she a will to do it; — she had been always highly pleased with his conversation, and had treated him with the same innocent freedom she did her brother, and she was now afraid, that it was her behaving to him in this manner, that had encouraged him to think of
making

making his addresses to her as a lover; — she looked back with regret on every little mark of favour she had shewn him, lest he should have construed them into a meaning, which was far distant from her thoughts; and these reflections, it was, that occasioned that unusual pensiveness, which sir Basil had observed in her at dinner, and which had given him some apprehensions proceeded from a cause less favourable to his friend.

Mrs. Wellair was not at all discouraged by the manner in which her sister had listened to this overture; — she knew that several proposals of the same nature had been made to her in the country, all which she had rejected, and rejected with a disdain: — a certain air of abhorrence widely different to what she testified on account of Mr. Truworth; and this prudent lady rightly judged, that he had little else to combat with, than the over-bashfulness of his mistress.

At night, on going to bed, she renewed the discourse, and pursued the theme she had began, with such success, that she brought Miss Harriot to confess, she believed there was no man more deserving to be loved than Mr. Truworth; — ‘but my dear sister,’ said she, ‘I have no inclination to marry, nor to leave you; I am quite happy as I am, and desire to be no more so:’ to which the other replied, that was childish talking, — that she would, doubtless, marry some time or other, — that she might, perhaps, never have so good an offer, and could not possibly have a better, therefore advised her, not to slip the present opportunity, but whenever Mr. Truworth should make a declaration of his passion to herself, to receive it in such a manner, as should not give him any room to imagine she was utterly averse to his pretensions.

Miss Harriot suffered her to urge her on this point for a considerable time, but at last replied, in a low and hesitating voice, that she would be guided by her friends, who she was perfectly convinced had her interest at heart, and knew much better than herself what conduct she ought to observe: to which Mrs. Wellair replied, that she doubted not but the end would abundantly justify the advice had been given her.

The first thing this lady did in the morning, was to go to her brother's chamber, and acquaint him with all that had passed between herself and Miss Harriot; after which they agreed together, that Mr. Truworth should have an opportunity that very day of making his addresses to her.

Though Sir Basil thought it needless to add any thing to what was already done, yet he could not forbear taking an occasion, when they were at breakfast, to mention Mr. Truworth's name, and the many good qualities he was possessed of.—Mrs. Wellair joined in the praises her brother gave him, but Miss Harriot spoke not a word:—on which, ‘Are you not of our opinion, sister?’ cried he to her.——‘Yes,’ brother, answered she, ‘Mr. Truworth is certainly a very fine gentleman.’—‘How cold is such an expression,’ resumed sir Basil, ‘and even that extorted?’—‘You would not sure, sir,’ said she, a little gaily, ‘have me in raptures about him, and speak as if I were in love with him?’

‘Indeed but I would,’ cried sir Basil; ‘and, what is more, would also have you be so;—he deserves it from you, and as you must some time or other be sensible of the tender passion, you cannot do it at more suitable years.’—‘I see no necessity,’ replied she, ‘for my being so at any years.’

‘It is a sign then,’ said he, ‘that you have not consulted nature; — have you never read what lord Lansdown has wrote upon this subject? — if you have not, I will repeat it to you.’

‘In vain from fate we strive to fly,

‘For first or last, as all must die,

‘So ’tis decreed by those above,

‘That first or last, we all must love.’

‘Poets are not always prophets’, answered she, laughing. — ‘It depends upon Mr. Trueworth himself,’ said sir Basil, ‘to prevent you from giving the lie to the prediction; — if he fails, I shall believe no other man in the world will ever have the power to engage you to fulfil it; — he dines here to day; — sister Wellair and I are obliged to go abroad in the afternoon, so must desire you to make tea, and entertain him as well as you can, ’till we come back.’

‘I see you are both in the plot against me,’ cried she; ‘but I shall endeavour to behave so as not to affront your guest, yet at the same time be far from making good your oracle.’

A gentleman coming in to sir Basil, broke off their discourse, and relieved Miss Harriot from any farther persecution at this time. — It was not that she disliked either the person or conversation of Mr. Trueworth; or that she was tired with the praises given him by her brother and sister; — on the contrary, she found a thousand things, which they had not mentioned, to admire in him: — in fine, he was, in reality, less indifferent to her, than she herself imagined; but there was a certain shyness in her disposition, which mingled some share of pain with the pleasure of hearing him spoke of as her lover.

She was sensible this propensity, which nature had implanted, was a weakness in her; but though she used her utmost efforts for overcoming it, she

she found herself unequal to the task: — in vain she considered, that the addresses of a man of such perfect honour and politeness, as Mr. Trueworth, could not but be accompanied with the most profound respect: — in vain she called to mind the example of other ladies, whom she had seen behave in the company of those, who professed themselves their lovers, with the greatest ease and sprightliness, the very sight of Mr. Trueworth, as she saw him from her chamber window, talking with her brother in the garden, threw her heart into palpitations; which all the reason she was mistress of, could not enable her to quiet; but when obliged to go down and sit with him at table, her confusion increased, by being more near the object which occasioned it; — she endeavoured to treat him with the same freedom she had been accustomed, but it was not in her power: — in fine, never woman suffered more, in constraining herself to be silent and demure, than she did, in constraining herself to be talkative and gay.

What then became of her, when sir Basil and Mrs. Wellair, after making a formal excuse for a short absence, went out, and left her exposed to the sollicitations of a passion, which her timid modesty had made her so much dread?

The moment Mr. Trueworth saw himself alone with her, he approached her with the most tender and respectful air, — ‘How often, madam, have I languished for an opportunity, such as this, of telling you how much my soul adores you! — My dear friend, sir Basil, has assured me he has prepared you to forgive the boldness of my flame, and that for his sake you will vouchsafe to listen to my vows; but it is from myself alone you can be convinced of the ardency of the love you have inspired.’

‘My

‘ My brother, sir,’ answered she, blushing, ‘ has indeed informed me, that I have obligations to you of a nature, which I was as far from expecting, as I am from deserving.’ — Here Mr. Trueworth began to run into some praises on the charms which had subdued his heart, which, though no more than dictated by his real sentiments, seemed to her too extravagant, and beyond what her modesty would suffer her to endure: ‘ Hold, sir’ cried she, interrupting him, ‘ if you would have me believe your professions are sincere, forbear, I beseech you, to talk to me in this manner: — it is an ill-judged policy, methinks, in you men, to idolize the women too much, you wish would think well of you; — if our sex are in reality so vain as you generally represent us, on whom but yourselves can the fault be laid? — And if we prove so weak as to imagine ourselves such, as either the flattery, or the partial affection of the lover paints us, we shall be apt to take every thing as our due, and think little gratitude is owing, for the offering he makes us of his heart.’

Mr. Trueworth was perfectly ravished at hearing her speak thus, but durst not express himself with too much warmth on the occasion: — ‘ It must be confessed, madam,’ replied he, ‘ that the beauties of the person, when not accompanied by those of the mind, afford but a short lived triumph to the fair possessor; — they dazzle at first sight, and take the senses as it were by surprise; but the impression soon wears off, and the captivated heart regains its former liberty, — nay, perhaps, wonders at itself for having been enslaved: — whereas those darts, which fly from the perfections of the mind, penetrate into the soul, and fix a lasting empire there; — but when both these charms shall happen to be united, as

in

‘in the lovely Harriot,’ continued he, taking one of her hands and kissing it; — ‘When in the most enchanting form that nature ever made, is found a soul enriched with every virtue, — every grace, — how indissoluble is the chain! — how glorious the bondage!’

‘Love is a theme I have never made my study,’ answered she; ‘but according to my notions of the matter, those gentlemen, who pretend to be affected by it, give themselves more trouble than they need, — as that passion is generally allowed rather to be the child of fancy, than of real merit in the object loved; I should think it would be sufficient for any man in his addresses to a lady, to tell her, that she happens to hit his taste, — that she is what he likes, without dressing her up in qualities, which, perhaps, have no existence but in his own imagination.’

‘Where love is founded on beauty alone, as I have already said,’ resumed Mr. Truworth, ‘the instructions you give, madam, of the manner of declaring it, is certainly very just; for, indeed, no farther could be warranted by sincerity: — but where reason directs the lover’s choice, and points out those excellencies which alone can make him happy in the possession of his wishes, ideas more sublime will naturally arise, and we can never too much admire, or praise, what is immediately from the Divine Source of all perfection! — It is not, O charming Harriot!’ pursued he, looking on her with the utmost tenderness; — ‘it is not those radiant eyes, — that lovely mouth, nor that sweet majesty, that shines through all your air, but it is the heaven within that I adore; — to that I pay my present worship, and on that build all my hopes of future bliss.’

Miss Harriot was about to make some reply, but his looks, the vehemence with which he uttered

tered these last words, and the passionate gesture which accompanied them, made her relapse into her former bashfulness, from which she had a little recovered herself, and again deprived her of the power of speech.

‘You give up the point then my angel,’ cried he perceiving she was silent, ‘and I am glad you do; for had you continued to prohibit my expatiating on these merits, which made me your adorer, I must have maintained the argument even against your lovely self, to whom I shall for ever yield in all things else.’

After this he fell, insensibly as it were, into some discourse concerning the divine ordinance of marriage, and then proceeded to give her the most amiable picture, that words could form of that state, when two persons of virtue, honour, and good sense, were by love and law united, and found themselves equally bound by duty and inclination, to make each other’s happiness.

There are some ladies, who listen very contentedly to the most warm and amorous addresses can be made to them, yet will not suffer the least word of marriage, till after a long and tedious preparation is made for a sound, which they pretend to think so dreadful. — These no doubt will say, that Mr. Truworth went too far for a lover, on the first declaration of his passion; but he was emboldened to act in the manner he did, by the brother of his mistress, and had the satisfaction to perceive she was not offended at it; — she had a great share of solid understanding, — was an enemy to all sorts of affectation, and as she knew the end proposed by his courtship was marriage, saw no reason why he should be fearful of mentioning it to her; and though her modesty would not permit her to take much part in a conversation of this nature, yet she was too artless, and in-

deed too sincere, to counterfeit a displeasure, which she did not feel.

C H A P. VIII.

Is more full of business than entertainment.

WHILE Mr. Truworth was thus prosecuting a suit, which every time he saw the lovely Harriot redoubled his impatience to accomplish, Mr. Francis Thoughtless had been twice at his lodgings without finding him at home; but on that gentleman's leaving his name the second time, and saying, he would come again the next morning, the other thought himself under an indispensable necessity of staying to receive his visit.

The meeting of these two was extremely civil and polite, but far from that cordial familiarity which used to pass between them, especially on the side of Mr. Francis. — After Mr. Truworth had congratulated him on the recovery of his health, and coming to town, they fell into some discourse on ordinary affairs, without the least mention of Miss Betsey, by either party, for a considerable time, till her brother growing a little impatient, that the other should say nothing to him on an affair, in which he had made him his confidant, and which he had taken so much pains to forward, said to him, with an air partly gay, and partly serious, — ‘I was surprised on my arrival to be told, that a passion so violent, as that you pretended for my sister, should all on a sudden vanish, and that a thing, which I once thought so near being concluded, was entirely broken off.’

‘Things of that nature,’ replied Mr. Truworth coldly, ‘are never concluded till accomplished: — accidents sometimes intervene to separate persons,

‘persons, who have seemed most likely to be united for ever, which, indeed, never was the case between me and that lady.’

‘Yet, sir,’ rejoined the other, a little irritated at his manner of speaking, ‘I think, that when a gentleman has made his addresses to a young lady of family and character, for any length of time, and in the public manner you did, some cause ought to be assigned for his deserting her.’

‘I am under no obligation,’ said Mr. Truworth, very gloomily, ‘to give an account of my behaviour to any one whatever; but in consideration of our friendship, and the love I once had for your sister, I shall make no scruple to tell you, that a woman of her humour would suit but ill with a man of mine; — as to any farther eclairsissement of this affair, it is from herself alone you must receive it.’ — ‘She shewed me a letter from you, sir,’ cried Mr. Francis hastily. — ‘That might then suffice to inform you,’ answered Mr. Truworth, that in what I have done, I but obeyed the dictates of my honour.’ — ‘Honour!’ cried the other, fiercely, and laying his hand upon his sword, ‘What is it you mean, sir? Did honour oppose your marriage with my sister?’

‘No menaces,’ said Mr. Truworth, with a gravity which was pretty near disdain, — ‘you know me incapable of fear; — I have fought for your sister, but will never fight against her. — I injure not her reputation; — on the contrary, I would defend it if unjustly attacked, even at the hazard of my life; but as to love or marriage, these are things now out of the question, — we both, perhaps, have other views, and the less is said of what is past the better.’

Mr. Francis naturally took fire on the least suspicion of an indignity offered to him, but when once convinced of his mistake, was no less ready

to repent and acknowledge it ; — he had seen many instances of the honour, generosity, and sincerity of Mr. Truworth ; he had also been witness of some of the levity and inconsiderateness of his sister, and the reflection of a moment served to make him see, this change had happened merely through her own ill conduct.

His rage abated even while the other was speaking, but a deep concern remained behind, and throwing himself down in a chair, ‘ Into what vexations,’ cried he, may not a whole family be plunged, through the indiscretion of one woman ?’

‘ Judge not too rashly,’ said Mr. Truworth ; — ‘ Miss Berfy may one day see a man so happy as to inspire her with sentiments far different from those she hitherto has entertained, and she also may be more happy herself, with a man who loves her with less delicacy than I did.’

The brother of miss Berfy seemed not to take any notice of these words, but rising in some confusion ; — ‘ Well, sir,’ said he, ‘ I shall trouble you no more upon this subject, — and am sorry I have done it now.’ — Mr. Truworth then told him, that though the intended alliance between them was broke off, he saw no occasion that their friendship should be so too ; — that he should be glad of an opportunity to return the favours he had received from him, in relation to his sister, though his endeavours on that score had not met with the desired success ; and that he hoped they should not live as strangers while they continued in the same town : — to all this Mr. Francis made but very short replies, either taking what he said as words of course, or because the disorder of his own mind would not permit him to prolong the conversation.

It is likely Mr. Truworth was not much troubled

troubled at the hasty leave this young gentleman took ; for though he always had a very sincere regard for him, yet the point, on which he now had come, was tender, and could not be touched upon without giving him some pain ; — he had no time however to make many reflections on the conversation had passed between them. — A letter was brought him by a porter, who waiting for an answer, he immediately opened it, and found the contents as follow ;

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

Sir,

‘ **E**Xtraordinary merits seldom fail of having as extraordinary effects ; — you have made a conquest of a heart, without knowing it, which not the utmost endeavours of any other could ever subdue. — I am commissioned to acquaint you, that a lady of some consideration in the world, and a large fortune in her own hands, thinks you alone deserve to be the master, both of that and of herself ; but as she is apprehensive of your being already engaged, begs you will be so generous as to confess the truth, that if so, she may put a timely stop to the progress of her growing passion ; — if not, you will, doubtless, hear more from her by the hand of,

SIR,

‘ Your unknown servant.

‘ P. S. Please to send this back, with your answer wrote on the other side of the paper, which you may put up under a cover sealed up, but without any direction. — Sincerity and secrecy are earnestly requested.’

Mr. Truworth could not avoid looking on this adventure as a very odd one ; yet whether the

proposal was real or feigned, the matter was wholly indifferent to him, and he hesitated not a moment what part he should take in it; but fate down immediately, and wrote, as desired, the following answer:

To the UNKNOWN.

' Sir, or Madam,

THOUGH I know the honour with which you flatter me is more the effect of fortune than desert, it would certainly make me vain and happy, were I not denied the power of accepting it. — The heart required of me by the lady is already disposed of, — irrecoverably disposed of, and I can only repay her goodness by sincerely wishing a return of her's, and with it all those felicities she would so lavishly bestow on,

' Her most obliged,

' And most humble servant,

' C. TRUEWORTH.

P. S. The lady may depend, that my secrecy shall be equal to the sincerity I have shewn in this.

He had no sooner dispatched the messenger who brought this, than a second came and presented him with another, and had orders also to wait for an answer; — he presently knew it came from miss Flora, and expected the contents to be such as he found them on perusing:

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

' Most cruel and ungenerous Man!

BOTH I am to give you epithets like these, — my heart shudders, and my trembling hand

‘ hand is scarce able to guide my pen, in those reproaches, which my reason tells me you deserve : — how unkind, — how stabbing to the soul was your behaviour at our last meeting ! — yet even then you promised me to write, — I depended on that promise, and hope had not quite forsook me ; — every knocking at the door, I expected was a messenger from you : — in vain I expected, — in vain I looked, — in vain I listened for the welcome mandate, and every disappointment threw me into fresh agonies. — I have sent twice to the coffee-house, — been there once in person, but could hear nothing of you : — O what secret recess now hides you from me ! — What can have caused so terrible a reverse in my so lately happy fate ? — I fear to guess ; for madness is in the thought ! — O ! do not drive me to extremes ! — Many women, with not half my love, or my despair, have run headlong into actions, which, in my cooler moments, I dread to think on. — Be assured, I cannot, — will not live without you ! — Torture me not any longer with suspense ! — Pronounce my doom at once ! — But let it be from your own mouth that I receive it, that you, at least, may be witness of the death you inflict, and be compelled to pity, if you cannot love ;

‘ The most unfortunate,

‘ And most faithful of her sex,

‘ P. MELLASIN.’

P. S. I have charged the man, who brings you this, to find you wheresoever you are, and not to leave you without an answer.’

Mr. Trueworth was in the utmost perplexity of mind, on reading this distracted epistle. — Of all the hours of his past life he could not recollect any

any one, which gave him so much cause of repentance, as that wherein he had commenced an amour with a woman of so violent a temper;—he had never loved her, and all the liking he ever had of her being now utterly erased by a more laudable impression, the guilty pleasures he had enjoyed with her were now irksome to his remembrance, and the more she endeavoured to revive the tender folly in him, the more she grew distasteful to him.

It so little becomes a woman, whose characteristic should be modesty, to use any endeavours to enforce desire, that those who do it are sure to convert love into indifference, and indifference into loathing and contempt:—even she, who, with the greatest seeming delicacy, labours to rekindle a flame once extinguished, will find the truth of what Morat says in the play:

‘To love once pass’d we cannot backward
‘ move;

‘ Call yesterday again, and we may love.’

Mr. Trueworth, however, had so much pity for that unfortunate creature, that he would have given, perhaps, good part of his estate, that she no longer loved him; but how to turn the tide of so extravagant a passion, he could not yet resolve, and it being near the time, in which he knew they would expect him at Sir Basil’s, where he now dined every day, and the messenger who brought the letter also growing impatient to be dispatched, he wrote in haste these few lines:

TO MISS FLORA MELLASIN.

‘ Madam,

‘ **B**USINESS of the greatest consequence now
‘ calls upon me, and I have no time to write
‘ as I would do, but depend upon it, that I will
‘ send

‘send to you to-morrow morning, and either appoint a meeting, or let you know my real sentiments in a letter, — till when, I beg you will make yourself more easy, if you desire to oblige him, who is,

‘With the most unfeigned good wishes,

‘MADAM,

‘Your most humble,

‘And most obedient Servant,

C. TRUEWORTH.

‘P. S. I shall take it as a favour, madam, that you will henceforward forbear to make any enquiry concerning me at the coffee house, or elsewhere.’

Having given this to miss Flora’s porter, he hasted away to fir Basil’s, there to compose his mind, after the embarrassments it had sustained that morning.

CH A P. IX.

Contains very little to the purpose.

MR. Francis Thoughtless had no sooner left the lodgings of Mr. Trueworth, than he went directly to those of his sister Betsy, where, in the humour he then was, the reader will easily suppose, he could not be very good company: — after telling her he had seen Mr. Trueworth, and had some conversation with him on her account, — ‘I am now convinced,’ said he, ‘of what before I doubted not, that by your own ill management, and want of a just sense of what is for your interest and happiness, you have lost an opportunity of establishing both, which can never be retrieved; — nor is this all, — your manner of behaviour not only ruins yourself, but involves all
‘belonging

‘belonging to you in endless quarrels and perplexities.’

These were reproaches which Miss Betsey had too much spirit to have borne from any one but a brother, and even to him, she was far from yielding that she had in any measure deserved them:— ‘I defy Truworth himself,’ cried she, with all the resentment of a disappointed lover in her heart, ‘to accuse me of one action, that the strictest virtue could condemn.’

‘Ah, sister,’ replied he, ‘do not let your vanity deceive you on this score:—I see very plainly, that Mr. Truworth regards you with too much indifference to retain resentment for any treatment you have given him;—that he once loved you I am well assured; that he no longer does so, is owing to yourself:—but I shall mention him no more,—the passion he had for you is extinguished, I believe, beyond all possibility of reviving, nor would I wish you to attempt it:—I would only have you remember what Mr. Goodman uttered concerning you with almost his dying breath; for my own part, I have not been a witness of your conduct, since the unhappy *brulée* I fell into on your account at Oxford, which I then hoped would be a sufficient warning for your future conduct.’

If Miss Betsey had been less innocent, it is probable she would have replied in a more satisfactory manner to her brother’s reproaches; but the real disdain she always had for whatever had the least tendency to dishonour, made her zealous in defending herself only in things, of which she was not accused, and too silent in regard of those, in which she was judged blame-worthy.

‘What avails your being virtuous?’ said Mr. Francis:— ‘I hope,—and I believe you are so;—but your reputation is of more consequence

‘quence to your family : — the loss of the one might be concealed, but a blemish on the other brings certain infamy and disgrace on yourself, and all belonging to you.’

On this, she assumed the courage to tell him, his way of reasoning was neither just nor delicate. — ‘Would you,’ said she, ‘be guilty of a base action, rather than have it suspected that you were so?’ — ‘No,’ answered he; ‘but virtue is a different thing in our sex, to what it is in yours; — the forfeiture of what is called virtue in a woman is more a folly than a baseness; but the virtue of a man is his courage, his constancy, his probity, which if he loses, he becomes contemptible to himself, as well as to the world.’

‘And certainly,’ rejoined Miss Betsy, with some warmth, ‘the loss of innocence must render a woman contemptible to herself, though she should happen to hide her transgression from the world.’ — ‘That may be,’ said Mr. Francis; ‘but then her kindred suffer not through her fault : — the remorse, and the vexation for what she has done, is all her own. — Indeed, sister,’ continued he, ‘a woman brings less dishonour upon a family, by twenty private sins, than by one public indiscretion.’

‘Well,’ answered she, ‘I hope I shall always take care to avoid both the one and the other, for my own sake. — As to indulging myself with the innocent pleasures of the town, I have the example of some ladies of the first quality, and best reputation, to justify me in it.’

Mr. Thoughtless was about to make some reply, which, perhaps, would have been pretty keen, but was prevented by the coming in of her maid, who delivering a letter to her, and saying, ‘From sir Frederick Fineer, madam,’ she hastily broke it open, and having read it, bid the

maid

maid let sir Frederick's servant know she would be at home.

'There, brother,' said she, giving him the letter, 'read that, and be convinced I have not lost every good offer in losing Mr. Trueworth.' — 'I wish you have not,' answered he sullenly. — He took the paper, however, and read the contents of it, which were these:

To the divine arbitress of my fate, the omnipotently lovely Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'O Goddess! more cruel than the avenging Nemesis, what have I done, that like Ixion I must still be tortured on the wheel of everlasting hopes and fears? — I hoped yesterday to have approached the shrine of your resplendent charms, but you had quitted the sacred dome which you inhabit, and vouchsafed to bless some happier mansion with your presence; — perhaps a rival: — Oh, forbid it heaven! — forbid it all ye stars, that under the Supreme rule all beneath the moon! — the thought is terrible, and shocks the inmost cavities of my adoring jealous soul. — I kneel while I am writing, and implore you to grant me permission to sip a cup of nectar and ambrosia at your tea-table this afternoon; — and if you can, without injustice to superior merit, debar all other intruders thence, that I may have liberty to pour forth my ejaculations at your feet. — I am,

'With the most ardent devotion,

'Brightest refulgency of beauty,

'Your most adoring,

'And everlasting slave,

'F. FINER.'

As little as Mr. Francis at this time was disposed to

to mirth, he could not, in spite of his ill humour, refrain laughing, on reading some expressions in this heroical learned epistle: — ‘I need not ask,’ said he, throwing the letter contemptuously on the table, ‘who, or what this new adorer of yours is: — it is easy to see he is either mad or a fool, or thinks to make you so.’

‘I have as bad an opinion of his intellects as you have,’ replied she; ‘but I assure you he is a baronet, and the presumptive heir of a much greater title, and has an estate large enough to keep me a coach and twelve, if the custom of the country permitted.’

Mr. Francis paused for a few moments, and after looking over the letter again, — I wish, said he, ‘instead of a fool of fashion, he is not a knave in the disguise of a coxcomb; — his stupidity seems to me to be too egregious to be natural, — all his expressions have more the appearance of a studied affectation, than of a real folly; — take care sister, I have heard there are many impostors in this town, who are continually on the watch for young ladies, who have lost their parents, and live in the unguarded manner you do.’

Miss Betsy seemed to treat her brother’s suspicions on this head with a good deal of contempt: — she told him, that the person, at whose house she became acquainted with sir Frederick, knew his circumstances perfectly well, — that he had a prodigious estate, — was of a very ancient and honourable family, and conversed with several people of the first quality in England; — ‘However,’ added she, — ‘you may call here this afternoon, and see him yourself if you please; for, according to my judgment, he has not wit enough to be an impostor.’

Mr. Francis replied, that he would be glad to

see so extraordinary a person, if he were not obliged to go upon some business, relating to the commission he was soliciting, which he feared would detain him beyond the hour; — but with your ‘leave,’ said he, ‘I will take this letter with me, and hear what my brother thinks of it.’

To this Miss Betsey readily agreed, and he went away in somewhat of a better humour than he had entered, or that he had put her into by the severe reprimands he had given her.

She had a very tender regard for her brothers, but did not think it their province to prescribe rules for her behaviour; — she looked upon herself as a better judge in what manner it would become her to act, than they could possibly be, as having lived more years in London than either of them had done months, and if she was willing to be advised, would not submit to be directed by them.

Thus did her pride a while support her spirits, but when she reflected on the affair of Mr. Trueworth, and the reasons she had given him for speaking and thinking of her in that cool and indifferent manner, she found he now did, she began to be somewhat less tenacious, and acknowledged within herself, that her brother Frank, exclusive of his friendship for that gentleman, had sufficient cause to blame her conduct in that point, and the heat of passion, which had been raised by some expressions he had uttered being over, she ceased to take unkindly what she was now sensible had only been occasioned by his zeal for her welfare.

She now saw in their true light all the mistakes she had been guilty of, — all her dangers, — all her escapes, — and blushed to remember, how she had been plunged into the one, merely by her own inadvertency, and been blessed with the other
only

only by the interposition of some accident, altogether unforeseen, and even un hoped for, by her.

She had also a more just and lively idea of the merits of Mr Trueworth, than ever she had been capable of entertaining, while he professed himself her lover : — the amiableness of his person, — his fine understanding, — his generosity, — his bravery, — his wit, and the delicacy and elegance of his conversation, seemed to her impossible to be equalled ; — she considered too, that his estate was much beyond what her fortune could expect, and that even his family was superior to her's, and could not help being very sensibly affected, that she had so rashly thrown away her pretensions to the heart of so valuable a man.

‘ ’Tis true,’ said she, ‘ that if I had an inclination to marry, I have other offers : — Mr. Munden, by his way of living, must have a good estate, perhaps not inferior to that of Mr. Trueworth : — the man has good sense, and wants neither personal nor acquired endowments, and I have tried both his love and constancy ; — besides, he lives always in town, has a taste for the pleasures of it, — a woman could not be very unhappy in being his wife. — Then there is sir Frederick Fineer ; — he is a fool indeed ; — but he is a man of quality, and I know several ladies, who are the envy of their own sex ; and the toast of the other, and yet have fools for their husbands.’

In this manner did she continue reasoning within herself, till her head began to ache ; and she was luckily relieved from it, by the last mentioned subject of her meditations.

He approached her with his accustomed formalities, first saluting the hem of her garment, then her hand, and lastly her lips, which she receiving with an air more than ordinarily serious, and also

making very short replies to the fine speeches he had prepared to entertain her with: — ‘What ‘invidious cloud,’ said he, ‘obscures the lightning of your eyes, and hides half the divinity ‘from my ravish’d sight!’ — ‘People cannot be ‘always in the same humour, sir Frederick,’ answered she. — ‘Your’s should be always gay,’ rejoined he, ‘if once you were mine; — you should ‘do nothing but love and laugh, and dress and ‘eat, and drink, and be adored: — speak then, ‘my angel,’ continued he, ‘when shall be the ‘happy day? — Say shall it be to-morrow?’

Here it was not in her power to retain any part of her former gravity: — ‘Bless me,’ cried she, ‘to-morrow! — What, marry to-morrow? — sure, ‘sir Frederick, you cannot think of such a thing? ‘— Why, I have not so much as dreamt of it.’ — ‘No matter,’ answered he, ‘you will have golden ‘dreams enough in my embraces, — defer then ‘the mutual bliss no longer, — let it be to-morrow.’ — ‘You are certainly mad, sir Frederick,’ said she; ‘but if I were enough so too, as really to ‘consent to such a hasty nuptial, — where pray ‘are the preparations for it?’

‘Oh, madam, as to that,’ resumed he, ‘people ‘of quality always marry in a deshabille; — a ‘new coach, — chariot, — servants, — liveries, and ‘rich cloaths for ourselves, may all be got ready ‘before we make our public appearance at court or ‘church.’ — ‘But there are other things to be ‘considered,’ said Miss Betsy, laughing outright. — ‘None of any importance,’ replied he: — ‘I will jointure you in my whole estate, — the ‘writings shall be drawn to-night, and presented ‘to you with the wedding-ring.’

‘This would be wonderful dispatch indeed,’ said she; ‘but, sir, I have two brothers whom I ‘must first consult on the affair.’ — Sir Frederick

rick seemed extremely stuck at these words, but recovering himself as soon as he was able, 'I thought, madam,' cried he, 'you were entirely at your own disposal.' — 'I am so, sir,' answered she, 'but I love my brothers, and will do nothing without their approbation.' — 'Ah, cruel fair,' cried he, 'little do you know the delicacy of my passion, — I must owe you wholly to yourself; — your brothers, no doubt, would favour my desires, but 'tis your own free-will alone can make me blessed. — Tell me not then of brothers,' continued he, 'but generously say you will be mine.'

Miss Betsy was about to make some reply, when word was brought that a servant of the elder Mr. Thoughtless desired to speak with her, on which she arose hastily, and went to the top of the staircase to hear what message he had to deliver to her, and was pleasingly surprised when he told her, that his master desired the favour of her company to supper immediately at his house. — As she never had an invitation there before, she was at a loss to guess what could have caused so sudden an alteration; — she asked the fellow what company was there: — he told her, only Mr. Francis, and another gentleman whose name he knew not, but believed they wanted her on some affairs concerning the late Mr. Goodman, because as he was waiting, he heard them often mention that gentleman and lady Mellasin.

Though she could not conceive on what purpose she was to be consulted on any thing relating to Mr. Goodman, yet she was extremely glad, that any occasion had happened to induce her brother to send for her to his house, and ordered the man to acquaint his master, that she would not fail to wait upon him, with as much expedition as a chair could bring her.

On her return to sir Frederick, she told him, she had received a summons from her elder brother, which she was under an indispensable necessity of complying with, so desired he would defer, till another opportunity, any farther discourse on the subject they had been talking of. — Having said this, she called hastily for her fan and gloves, and at the same time gave orders for a chair. — Sir Frederick seemed very much confounded, but finding that any attempt to detain her would be impracticable, took his leave, saying, ‘ You are going to your brother’s, madam : ’ To which she answering, she was so. ‘ I beg then, madam,’ rejoined he, ‘ that you will not mention any thing concerning me, or the passion I have for you, till I have the honour of seeing you again. — Be assured,’ continued he, ‘ I have mighty reasons for this request, and such, as I flatter myself you will allow to be just.’ — He said no more, but perceiving she was ready, led her down stairs, and having put her into a chair, went into that which waited for himself, little satisfied with the success of this visit.

Though the motives on which Miss Betsy’s company was desired in so much hurry, by a brother, who had never before once invited her, may seem strange, yet as that incident was but the consequence of other matters, which yet remain untold, regularity requires they should first be discussed.

C H A P. X.

Contains an account of some transactions, which, though they may not be very pleasing in the repetition, nor are of any great consequence to Miss Betsy, would render this history extremely deficient, if omitted.

AS lady Mellasin has made so considerable a figure in the former parts of this history, the reader

reader may perhaps now begin to think she has been too long neglected, it is therefore proper to proceed directly to some account, how that guilty and unfortunate woman behaved, after being driven in the manner already related from the house of her much-injured husband. — Mr. Goodman was advised by his lawyer to be extremely private in the prosecution he was going to commence against her, and by no means to let her know the secret of her criminal conversation with Marplus had been discovered to him : — this seemed a caution necessary to be observed, in order to prevent her from taking any measures, either to invalidate the evidence of the witnesses, or prevail upon them to abscond, when the proof of what they had sworn against her should be expected : — the whole detection of her guilt was designed to come at once upon her like a thunder-clap, and thereby all the little efforts of artifice and chicanry, to which she, doubtless, would otherwise have had recourse, be rendered of no use, nor give the least impediment to justice.

Accordingly, this zealous assertor of his client's cause went to visit her, as of his own good will ; — flattered her with the hope, that her husband would soon be prevailed upon to take her home again, and lent her several small sums of money to supply her necessities, saying, at the same time, that when matters were made up between them, and all was over, he very well knew Mr. Goodman would return it to him with thanks.

This stratagem had the effect it was intended for ; — it not only kept her from attempting any thing of the nature abovementioned, but also from running Mr. Goodman into debt, which certainly she might have done, on some pretence or other, in spite of all the care and means that could have been taken to destroy her credit.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that acting in this manner was a prodigious piece of dissimulation ; but, at the same time, it must be acknowledged also, that it was abundantly justified by the cause, and practised for the most laudable end, to serve an honest, worthy gentleman, his friend and client, against a woman, who had wronged him in the tenderest point, and who was capable of making use of the vilest methods to elude the punishment her crimes deserved ; and as a great author tells us,

‘ It is a kind of stupid honesty,

‘ Among known knaves, to play upon the
‘ square.’

Lady Mellasin, however, was lulled into so perfect a security by her dependance on the good-nature of her husband, and the tender affection he had always shewn to her, as well as by the high character she had always heard of the lawyer’s veracity, that she was more easy than could have been expected, in a woman of her situation, even though it had been as she was made to believe.

She received, and returned with her usual politeness and gaiety, the visits that were made her by all those who thought proper to continue an acquaintance with her ; — she pretended that it was only a little family contest, that had separated her from Mr. Goodman for a short time ; and always mentioned him with so much kindness and respect, as made every one believe, there was nothing between them, but what would be easily made up.

This was indeed the most prudent method she could take, not only to preserve her own reputation to the world, but also to give Mr. Goodman a high idea of her conduct, if what she said should happen to be repeated to him.

She

She was every day in expectation, that through her own good management, and the intercession of the lawyer, whom she now took to be her staunch friend, all would be over, and she should be recalled home, when a citation to appear before the doctors of the civil law was delivered to her, by an officer belonging to that court.

It is more easy to conceive than describe her distraction, at so unlooked-for a turn ; — she now found, that her intrigue with Marplus was discovered, and that all she had to dread, was like to fall upon her by that event ; her perplexity was also greatly increased, by her not being able to find out by whom, or by what means she had been betrayed ; — she sent immediately in search of Marplus, whom, since his arresting Mr. Goodman, she had never once seen, nor heard any thing of ; but all the information she could get of him, was, that he had been thrown in prison by Mr. Goodman, and after confinement of a few days, had been released, and was gone nobody knew where, but as it was supposed out of England ; — that his wife had likewise removed from her lodgings, but whether with an intention to follow him, or not, no certain intelligence could be given.

As this unhappy woman, therefore, neither knew on what foundation the accusation against her was built, nor what evidences could be produced to prove it, she might very well be bewildered in her thoughts, and not know what course to take ; yet amidst all these matters of astonishment, — oppressed with grief, and struck with horror at the near prospect of approaching infamy, she had courage, and presence enough of mind, to enable her to do every thing that was necessary for her defence in so bad a cause.

Mr. Goodman's indisposition putting a stop to the process, she had time to consult with those whom

whom she found most qualified for the purpose ; — her chief agent was a pettifogger, or under-strapper in the law, one who knew all those quirks and evasions, which are called the knavish part of it, and as the extreme indigence of his circumstances made him ready to undertake any thing: though never so desperate, provided it afforded a prospect of advantage, so he had impudence and cunning enough to go through with it, even to the hazard of his ears.

This man kept up her spirits, by assuring her, he would find ways and means so to puzzle the cause, that nothing should be clearly proved against her ; but there was no opportunity for him to exercise his abilities this way, for Mr. Goodman's death soon after furnished him with another. — Lady Mellasin was no sooner informed, by spies she kept continually about Mr. Goodman's house, that his life was despaired of, than they set about making his will ; — the first article of which, after the prelude usual in such writings, was this :

‘ IMPRIMIS, I give and bequeath to my dear
 ‘ and well beloved wife Margaret, lady Mellasin
 ‘ Goodman, the full sum of thirty thousand pounds
 ‘ of lawful money of Great-Britain, over and a-
 ‘ bove what otherwise she might lay claim to as
 ‘ my widow, in consideration of the great wrong
 ‘ I have done her, through the insinuations of ma-
 ‘ licious and evil-minded persons, which I now
 ‘ heartily repent me of, and hope, that God and
 ‘ she will forgive me for it.’

Then followed some other legacies to several of his kindred, and those of his friends, whom he had been known to have been the most intimate with ; but the sums to each were very trifling, and did not amount in the whole to above seven or eight hundred pounds. — As every one, who had the

the least acquaintance with Mr. Goodman, was very well convinced, that he had always intended his nephew for his heir, the pretended will went on in this manner :

‘ Item, I give and bequeath to my dear nephew, Edward Goodman, the son of Nathaniel Goodman, and of Catherine his wife, late of Bengal, in the East-Indies, the whole residue of my effects, whatsoever and wheresoever they shall be found at my demise ; — provided, that he, the said Edward Goodman, shall take to be his lawful wife, Flora Mellasin, only daughter, and remaining issue of sir Timon Mellasin, bart. and of the above-mentioned Margaret his wife ; but in case that either party shall refuse to enter into such marriage, then, that he the said Edward Goodman, shall be obliged to pay to the said Flora Mellasin, the full sum of five thousand pounds of lawful money of Great-Britain, in consideration of the misfortunes she has suffered by the injury I have done her mother.’

This impudent piece of forgery was signed Samuel Goodman, — in a character so like that gentleman’s, that when compared with other papers of his own hand-writing, the difference could not be distinguished by those who was best acquainted with it : — two persons also of the lawyer’s procuring, set their names as witnesses.

Notwithstanding the flagrancy of this attempt, Lady Mellasin flattered herself with the hopes of its success, and on Mr. Goodman’s death threw in a caveat against the real will, and set up this pretended one.

On the other hand, though one would imagine were needed but little skill for the detection of so gross an imposition, yet Mr. Goodman’s lawyer thought proper to get all the helps he could corroborate the truth. — The piece of forgery

was dated about ten days before Mr. Goodman died ;— he knew, that the elder Mr. Thoughtless came every day to visit him, during the whole time of his sickness, and that Miss Betsy, at the time this will was supposed to be made, actually lived in the house, and that neither of these two could be totally ignorant of such a transaction, in case any such had been.

It was therefore on the lawyer's request, that Miss Betsy was sent for to her brother's house ;— she answered with a great deal of readiness, to all the questions he put to her, according to the best of her knowledge, particularly, as to that concerning the making the will, she said, that she had never heard the least mention of any lawyer but himself coming to Mr. Goodman's, during the whole time of his sickness, and that she verily believed, no will, but that drawn up by him, and which all the family knew of, could possibly be made by Mr. Goodman's orders, or in his house ; and as to the article in the pretended will, relating to miss Flora, nothing could be a more palpable forgery, because Mr. Goodman had offered five hundred pounds with her in marriage to a linen-draper, not above six weeks before his parting with lady Mellasin, ' which,' added she ' is ' a very plain proof, that he never intended her ' for his nephew.'

All the time Miss Betsy stayed, the whole discourse was on this affair, and she had no opportunity, as the lawyer was present, to acquaint her brothers with any thing concerning sir Frederick Fineer, as otherwise it was her full intention to have done, after the surprising injunction he had laid upon her of secrecy, in regard of his passion, and every thing relating to him.

C H A P. XI.

Is very well deserving the attention of all those who are about to marry.

WHILE Miss Flora was buoyed up with the expectation, that her mother would soon be reconciled to Mr. Goodman, she abated not of her former gaiety, and thought of nothing but indulging her amorous inclinations with the man she liked; but when once those expectations ceased, her spirits began to fail:—she now found it necessary for her interest, as well as pleasure, to preserve, if possible, the affection of her lover;—she knew not what dreadful consequences the prosecution, Mr. Goodman was about to exhibit against her mother, might be attended with, and trembled to think, she must share with her the double load of infamy and penury, and rightly judged that a man of Mr. Truworth's fortune, honour, and good-nature, would not suffer a woman, with whom he continued a tender communication, to be oppressed with any ills his purse could relieve her from:—the apprehensions, therefore, that she might one day be reduced to stand in need of his support, assisted the real passion she had for him, and made her feel, on the first appearance of his growing coldness towards her, all those horrors, those distractions, which her letters to him had so lively represented.

On his ceasing to make any fixed appointment with her, and from seeing her every day, to seeing her but once in three or four days, gave her, with reason, the most terrible alarms;—but when, after an absence of near a week, she had followed him to the coffee-house, the cool and indifferent reception she there met with, gave her,

indeed, a mortal stab to all her hopes, and she no longer hesitated to pronounce her own doom, and cry out she was undone.

The excuse he made of business was too weak, — too trite, — too common place to gain any credit with her, or alleviate her sorrows; — she knew the world too well to imagine a young gay gentleman, like him, would forego whatever he thought a pleasure, for any business he could possibly have; — she doubted not but there was a woman in the case, and the thoughts that, while she was in vain expecting him, he was soliciting those favours from a rival, she had so lavishly bestowed, and languished to repeat, fired her jealous brain, even to a degree of frenzy.

Awhile she raved with all the wild despair of ill requited burning love, but other emotions soon rose in her distracted bosom not to controul, but add fresh fuel to the flame already kindled there: — ‘My circumstances!’ cried she; — ‘my wretched circumstances! — What will become of me? — involved in my mother’s shame, he will, perhaps, make that a pretence for abandoning me to those misfortunes, I thought I might have depended on him to relieve.

However, as the little biller, in answer to her last letter to him, contained a promise that he would write to her the next day, she endeavoured, as much as she was able, to compose herself till that time, though she was far from hoping the explanation she expected to receive in it, would afford any consolation to her tormented mind.

Mr. Trueworth also, in the mean time, was not without his own anxieties: — a man of honour frequently finds more difficulty in getting rid of a woman he is weary of, and loves him, than obtaining a woman he loves, and is in pursuit of; but

but this gentleman had a more than ordinary perplexity to struggle through: — few women would go the lengths Miss Flora had done for the accomplishment of her desires, and he easily saw, by the whole tenor of her behaviour, she would go as great, and even more to continue the enjoyment of them.

Glad would he have been to have brought her by degrees to an indifference for him, — to have prevailed on her to submit her passion to the government of her reason, and to be convinced, that an amour, such as their's had been, ought to be looked upon only as a transient pleasure; — to be continued while mutual inclination and convenience permitted, and when broke off remembered but as a dream.

But this he found was not to be done with a woman of miss Flora's temper; — he therefore thought it best not to keep her any longer in suspense, but let her know at once the revolution in her fate, as to that point, which regarded him, and the true motive that had occasioned it, which he accordingly did in these terms :

TO MISS FLORA MELLASIN.

' MADAM,

' IT is with very great difficulty I employ my pen
' to tell you, it is wholly inconvenient for us
' ever to meet again, in the manner we have lately
' done; but I flatter myself you have too much
' good sense, and too much honour, not to forgive what all laws, both human and divine
' oblige me to. — I am entering into a state,
' which utterly forbids the continuance of those
' gallantries, which before pleaded their own excuse; — in fine, I am going to be married, and
' it would be the highest injustice in me to expect
' that fidelity, which alone can make me happy in
I 2 ' a wife,

‘ a wife, if my own conduct did not set her an example.

‘ Though I must cease to languish for a repetition of those favours you have blessed me with, yet be assured I shall always remember them with gratitude, and the best good wishes for the prosperity of the fair bestower.

‘ I send you back all the testimonies I have received of your tenderness, that are in my power to return :—— It belongs to yourself to make use of your utmost endeavours for the recovery of the heart, which dictated them. —— This I earnestly intreat of you, and in the hope that you will soon accomplish a work so absolutely necessary for your peace and reputation, I remain,

‘ As far as honour will permit,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most obliged,

‘ And most humble servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

Mr. Trueworth flattered himself, that so plain a declaration of his sentiments, and intentions, would put a total end to all future correspondence between them, and having looked it over, after he had finished and found it such as he thought proper for the purpose, put it under a cover, with all the letters he had received from Miss Flora, not excepting the first invitation she had made him, under the title of the Incognita, and sent away the packet by a porter; for he had never entrusted his servants with the conveyance of any epistle from him to that lady.

Miss Flora, from the moment her eyes were open in the morning, if it can be supposed she had any sleep that night, had been watching with the most racking impatience for the arrival of Mr. Trueworth’s messenger; — she wished, but dreaded more the eclairsissement, which she expected

pected would be contained in the mandate he had promised to send, yet was distracted for the certainty, how cruel soever it might prove.

At length it came, and with it a confirmation of even worse than the most terrible of her apprehensions had suggested : — the sight of her own letters on her opening it, almost threw her into a swoon ; but when her streaming eyes had greedily devoured the contents of the billet that accompanied them, excess of desperation struck her for some moments stupid, and rendered her mind inactive as her frame.

But when awakened from this lethargy of silent grief, she felt all the horrors of a fate she had so much dreaded : — frustrated at once in every hope, that love or interest had presented to her, words cannot paint the wildness of her fancy ; — she tore her hair and garments, and scarce spared that face, she had taken so much pains to ornament, for wanting charms to secure the conquest it had gained.

But with the more violence those tourbillions of the mind rage for a while, the sooner they subside, and all is hush'd again ; — as I remember to have somewhere read,

‘ After a tempest, when the winds are laid,
‘ The calm sea wonders at the wreck it made.’

So this unhappy and abandoned creature, too much deserving of the fate she met with, having exhausted her whole stock of tears, and wasted all the breath that life could spare, in fruitless exclamations, the passions which had raised these commotions in her soul, became more weak, and the beguiler Hope once more returned, to lull her wearied spirits into a short-lived ease.

She now saw the folly of venting her rage upon herself ; — that to give way to grief and despair would avail her nothing, but only serve to

render her more miserable ; — that instead of sitting tamely down, and meanly lamenting her misfortune in the loss of a lover, on whom she had built so much, she ought rather to exert all the courage, resolution, and artifice she was mistress of, in contriving some way of preventing it, if possible.

‘ He is not yet married,’ said she ; — ‘ the irrevocable words not yet are past : — I have already broke off his courtship to one woman, — why may I not be as successful in doing so with another ? — He cannot love the present engrosser of his heart more than he did Miss Bessy Thoughtless ; — ’tis worth, at least, the pains of an attempt.’

The first step she had to take, towards the execution of her design, was to find out the name, condition, and dwelling, of her happy rival, and this she thought there would be no great difficulty in doing, as she doubted not but Mr. Truworth visited her every day, and it would be easy for her to employ a person to watch where he went, and afterwards to make the proper enquiries.

But, in the mean time, it required some consideration how to behave to that gentleman, so as to preserve in him some sort of esteem for her, without which she rightly judged it would be impossible for her ever to recover his love, in case she should be so fortunate as to separate him from the present object of his flame.

She knew very well, that all testimonies of despair, in a woman no longer loved, only create uneasiness in the man who occasioned it, and but serve to make him more heartily wish to get rid of her ; she therefore found it best, as it certainly was, to pretend to fall in with Mr. Truworth’s way of thinking, — seem to be convinced by his reasons, and ready to submit to whatever suited with

with his interest or convenience: — it was some time before she could bring herself into a fit temper for this act of dissimulation, but she at last arrived at it, and gave a proof how great a proficient she was in it, by the following lines:

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

Dear Sir,

I AM apt to believe you as little expected as desired an answer to the eclairsissement of yesterday, nor would I have given you the trouble of this, but to assure you, it shall be the last of any kind you ever shall receive from me. — Yes, — I have now done with reproaches, and complaints, — I have nothing to alledge against you, — nothing to accuse you of: — could the fond folly of my tender passion have given me leisure for a moment's reflection, I had foreseen, that the misfortune, which is now falling upon me, was inevitable. — I am now convinced, that I ought not to have hoped, that the unbounded happiness I so lately enjoyed, could be of any long duration; — that a man of your fortune and figure in the world, must one day marry; — names and families must be supported, and your's is too considerable for you to suffer it to be extinct: — I must not, — I will not, therefore, repine at a thing, which, in my cooler moments, I cannot but look upon as essential to your honour and convenience. — Had you quitted me on any other score, I cannot answer but I might have been hurried into extravagancies displeasing to you, and unbecoming of myself: — but here I must resign, and am determined to do so, with the same patience, in shew at least, as if I had never loved. — I will not tell you the agonies I have sustained in the cruel conflict,
between

‘ between my reason and my passion, in making
 ‘ this resolution : — it is sufficient for you to know,
 ‘ that the former has the victory. — More might
 ‘ too much effect your generous nature ; besides,
 ‘ when woes are remediless, they are best borne in
 ‘ silence.

‘ Farewell ! — Oh, farewell for ever ! — may
 ‘ you find every thing in the happy she you make
 ‘ your choice of, to give you lasting bliss ; and,
 ‘ to compleat all ; may she love you with the same
 ‘ ardency, tenderness, and disinterestedness, as
 ‘ her, who must now only subscribe herself,

‘ At an eternal distance !

‘ Dear, dear SIR,

‘ Your most faithful friend,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ F. MELLASIN.’

This letter, which, it must be confessed, was wrote artfully enough, had all the effect it was intended for, on the mind of Mr. Truworth ; — it not only afforded him an infinity of contentment, as he hoped she would soon be enabled to banish all those disturbed emotions, which naturally attend the breaking of an acquaintance such as their’s had been, but it also established in him, a very high idea of her good understanding, — disinterested affection, — honour, and sincerity ; but how long he continued in this favourable opinion, as to the three last mentioned qualifications, will hereafter be shewn.

In the mean time, something happened, which, as he was a man just, even to the extremest nicety, gave him, according to his way of thinking, a great deal of reason to reproach himself.

C H A P. XII.

Miss Betsy's innocence, as to the Denham affair, fully cleared up to Mr. Trueworth, by a very extraordinary accident.

MR. Trueworth had made so great a progress in his courtship, that the sincerity of Miss Harriot got the better of her bashfulness, even so far as to confess to him, it was with pleasure she yielded to the persuasions of her friends, in favour of his love, and that he had infinitely the preference of all mankind in her esteem; in fine, her behaviour was such, as left nothing wanting but the ceremony to assure him of his happiness.

Sir Basil also having concluded every thing with the father of his mistress, brought that young lady acquainted with his sisters, who, highly approving their brother's choice, soon treated her, and were treated by her, with the same affection and familiarity as if already united.

There were few hours, excepting those allotted by nature and custom for repose, which this amiable company did not pass together; the old gentleman, who was extremely good humoured, when nothing relating to the parting with his money came on the carpet, would frequently make one among them, and being one day more than ordinarily chearful, told Mr. Trueworth, that as he found the two weddings were to be solemnized in one day, and he should give his daughter's hand to sir Basil, desired he might also have the honour of bestowing Miss Harriot's upon him;—to which Mr. Trueworth replied, that he should joyfully receive her from any hands, but more particularly from his;—and that he took the offer he made him as a very great favour:—on this, the other grew very gay, and said abundance
of

of merry things, to the no small expence of blushes, both in his daughter and Miss Harriot.

It is impossible for any lovers, while waiting for the consummation of their wishes, to enjoy a more uninterrupted felicity, than did sir Basil and Mr. Trueworth: — continually blest with the society of their dear mistresses, and receiving from them all the marks, that a virtuous affection could bestow, yet both of them found it requisite to contrive every day some new party of pleasure or other, in order to beguile the necessary, though to them tedious, time it took up in drawing of writings, and other preparations for the so much longed-for nuptials, which Mrs. Wellair did not fail to do all on her part to hasten, being impatient to return to her family, whence she had been absent longer than she had intended.

Sir Basil and Mr. Trueworth having been taking a little walk in the park one morning, the former finding himself so near the habitation of Miss Mabel, could not forbear calling on her, though she was to dine that day at his house, and Mr. Trueworth readily accompanied him — that lady was then at her toilet, but made no scruple of admitting them into her dressing-room, where they had scarce seated themselves, when her woman, who was waiting, was called out by a footman to speak to some people, who, he said, were very importunate to see Miss Mabel, and would take no answer from him.

‘Rude guests, indeed,’ cried Miss Mabel, ‘that will not take an answer from a servant: — ‘Who are they?’ — ‘I never saw them before,’ madam,’ replied the footman; ‘but the one is a woman of a very mean appearance, and the other, I believe, is a soldier: — I told them your ladyship had company, and could not be seen; but the man said, he only begged one
‘word

word with you, — that he was just come from abroad, and wanted to know where he might see his child, and a deal of such stuff: — the woman is almost as impertinent as the man, and I cannot get them from the door.'

'I will lay my life upon it, madam,' said the waiting-maid, 'that this is the father of the child, that you and Miss Betsy Thoughtless have been so good to keep, ever since the mother's death.' — 'I verily believe thou hast hit upon the right,' cried Miss Mabel; — 'prithee go down, and if it be as thou imaginest, bid them come up, — I will see them.'

The maid went as she was ordered, and immediately returned with two persons, such as the footman had described: — the woman was the first that advanced, and after dropping two or three courtesies to each of the company, addressed herself to Miss Mabel in these words: — 'I do not know, madam,' said she, 'whether your ladyship may remember me, but I nursed poor Mrs. Jinks, your ladyship's sempstress and clear-starcher, all the time of her lying-in, when your ladyship, and madam Betsy Thoughtless, were so good as to stand godmothers, and afterwards took the child, that it might not go to the parish.'

'I remember you very well,' replied Miss Mabel; 'but pray what is your business with me now?' — 'Why, madam,' said she, 'your ladyship must know, that Mrs. Jinks's husband has seen his folly at last, — has left the army, and is resolved to take up and settle in the world; — so, madam, if your ladyship pleases, he would willingly have his child.'

'O! doubtless, he may have his child,' rejoined Miss Mabel; — 'but harkye, friend,' continued she, turning to the man, 'are you able to keep

‘keep your child?’ — ‘Yes, madam,’ answered he, coming forward, ‘thank God, and good friends; I had an uncle down in Northamptonshire, who died a while ago, and left me a pretty little farm there; — and so, as my neighbour here was telling you, I would not have my child a burthen to any body.’ — ‘If we had thought it a burthen,’ said Miss Mabel, ‘we should not have taken it upon us; — however, I am glad you are in circumstances to maintain it yourself; — your wife was a very honest, industrious woman, and suffered a great deal through your neglect, but I hope you will make it up in the care of the child she has left behind.’

‘Aye, madam,’ replied he, wiping his eyes, ‘I have nothing else to remember her; — I did not use her so well as she deserved, that’s certain, but I have sowed all my wild oats, as the saying is, and I wish she were alive to have the benefit of it.’

‘That cannot be,’ interrupted the woman, ‘so don’t trouble good madam with your sorrowful stories; — if her ladyship will be so good only to give us directions where to find the child, for we have been to madam Betty’s, and her ladyship was not at home, so we made bold to come here.’ — ‘Yes, madam,’ cried he, ‘for my colonel comes to town in a day or two, and I shall get my discharge, and have no more to do with the service, so would willingly have my child to take down with me to the farm.’

Miss Mabel made no other answer to this, than saying, it was very well, and immediately gave them the direction they requested, to Goody Bushman’s, at Denham. — ‘I cannot tell you exactly where the house is,’ said she, ‘but you will easily find her, the husband is a gardener, and she has been a nurse for many years?’

The

The fellow seemed extremely pleased, thanked her as well as he could in his homely fashion, and desired she would be so kind to give his duty to the other lady, and thank her also, for her part of the favours both his wife and child had received, nor had he forgot his manners so far, as not to accompany these testimonies of his gratitude with a great many low scrapes, till he got quite out of the room.

After this sir Basil began to grow a little pleasant with Miss Mabel, concerning the motherly part she had been acting: — ‘You do me more honour than I deserve,’ said she laughing; ‘for it was but half a child I had to take care of, so consequently I could be but half a mother. — I am glad, however,’ continued she, more seriously, ‘that my little god-daughter has found a father.’

While they were talking in this manner, the old gentleman happening to come in, and hearing sir Basil was above with his daughter, sent to desire to speak with him in his closet.

Miss Mabel being now alone with Mr. Trueworth, thought she saw something in his countenance, which very much surprised her, — ‘You are pensive, sir,’ said she; — ‘I hope the mention we have been making of Miss Betsy has given you no alarm.’ — ‘A very great one,’ answered he; ‘but not on the account you may perhaps imagine: — I have wronged that lady in the most cruel manner; — and though the injury I have done her went no farther than my own heart, yet I never can forgive myself for harbouring sentiments, which I now find were so groundless and unjust.’

As it was not possible for Miss Mabel to comprehend the meaning of these words, she intreated him, somewhat hastily, to explain the mystery they seemed to contain: on which he made no

scruple of repeating to her the substance of the letter he had received ; — his going down to Denham, in order to convince himself more fully, and the many circumstances, which, according to all appearances, corroborated the truth of that infamous scandal.

Never was astonishment equal to that Miss Mabel was in, on hearing the narrative of so monstrous a piece of villainy : — ‘ Good God ! ’ cried she, ‘ I know Miss Betty has many enemies, who set all her actions in the worst light, and construe every thing she says and does into meanings she is ignorant of herself ; but this is so impudent, — so unparalleled a slander, as I could not have thought the malice of either men or devils could have invented.’

‘ Indeed, madam,’ said Mr. Trueworth, ‘ should fortune ever discover to me the author of this execrable falsehood, I know no revenge I could take, that would be sufficient, both for traducing the innocence of that lady, and the imposition practised upon myself ; — Miss Mabel agreed with him, that no punishment could be too bad for the inventors of such cruel aspersions, and having a little vented her indignation on all who were capable of the like practices ; — ‘ I suppose then,’ said she, ‘ that it was owing to this wicked story that you desisted your visits to Miss Betty.’

‘ Not altogether, madam,’ answered he ; — ‘ I had long before seen it was not in my power to inspire that lady with any sentiments of the kind, that would make me happy in a married state. — I loved her, but my reason combated with my passion, and got the better.’

‘ I understand you, sir,’ replied she, ‘ and though I hope, nay believe in my soul, that poor Miss Betty is innocent as a vestal, yet I cannot but
own

‘own, that the too great gaiety of her temper, and
‘the pride of attracting as many admirers as have
‘eyes to behold her, hurries her into errors,
‘which, if persevered in, cannot but be fatal,
‘both to the peace and reputation of a husband;
‘—where you now are fixed you doubtless have
‘a much better prospect of being truly happy.—
‘It is however a great pity, methinks,’ continued
this amiable lady, ‘that so many rare and excel-
‘lent qualities, as Miss Betsy is possessed of,
‘should all be swallowed up and lost in the non-
‘sensical vanity of being too generally admired.’

They had time for no more, —sir Basil returned; —he had only been sent for to examine the foul copy of the marriage articles, which the old gentleman had just brought from his lawyers, on purpose to shew it to him some time that day, and they now took their leave, that the lady might have time to dress; —sir Basil looking on his watch, said, it was then a quarter past two, and they should dine at three, so begged she would not waste too much time in consulting her glass; ‘For,’ added he, ‘you know you have
‘always charms for me.’ —‘And I am not
‘ashamed then,’ replied she, with a smile, ‘even
‘before Mr. Trueworth, to confess, that I desire
‘to have none for any other.’

He kissed her hand on this obliging speech, and ran hastily down stairs, followed by Mr. Trueworth, whose temper had not yet quite recovered its accustomed vivacity.

C H A P. XIII.

Seems to promise a very great change for the better, both in the humour and conduct of Miss Betsy, in regard to those who professed themselves her lovers.

AS little as Miss Betsy had accustomed herself to compare and judge of things, she wanted not the power, whenever it pleased her to have the will to do so : — the words of sir Frederick Fineer, on taking leave of her at his last visit, sunk pretty deeply into her mind, nor could she remember them without a mixture of surprise, resentment, and confusion. — No man, excepting Mr. Saveing, whose reasons for it she could not but allow were justifiable, had hitherto ever presumed to make his addresses to her in a clandestine manner, and sir Frederick Fineer seemed to her, of all men, to have the least excuse for doing so, and she would not have hesitated one moment to come into her brother Frank's opinion, that he was no other than an impostor, if the dependance she had on the good faith of Mrs. Modely had not prevented her from entertaining such a belief.

Besides, all the pleasure her gay young heart as yet had ever been capable of taking in the conquests she had made, consisted in their being known, and this proceeding in sir Frederick was too mortifying to that darling propensity, to be easily forgiven, even though he should make it appear, that the motives on which he requested this secrecy was such as could not be dispensed with.

‘What can the man mean?’ said she : — ‘I suppose, by his desiring his courtship to me, should be a secret, he intends a marriage with me

‘ me should be so too ; — that I should live with
 ‘ him only as the slave of his loose pleasures ;
 ‘ and, though a lawful wife, pass me in the eyes
 ‘ of the world for a kept mistress. — Was ever
 ‘ such insolence ! — such an unparalleled insult,
 ‘ both on my person and understanding ! —
 ‘ Heaven be my witness, that it is only his quality
 ‘ could induce me ; nay, I know not as yet whe-
 ‘ ther even that would be sufficient to induce me
 ‘ to become his wife, and can he be so ridiculously
 ‘ vain as to imagine I would accept him on any
 ‘ cheaper terms, than that eclat his rank and for-
 ‘ tune would bestow upon me ?’

She spent all that part of the night, which she could spare from sleep, in meditating on this affair, and at last came to a resolution of seeing him no more, whatever he might pretend in justification of his late request.

She also had it in her head to return unopened any letter he should send, but curiosity prevailed above her resentment in this point, and when his servant came in the morning, and presented her with his master’s compliments, and a billet at the same time, she had not the power of denying herself the satisfaction of seeing what excuse he would make : — the contents of it were as follow :

To the delight of my eyes, the life of my desires,
 the only hope and joy of my adoring soul,
 the divine *Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.*

‘ *Bright star of England !*

‘ **S**INCE last I left your radiant presence, my
 ‘ mind has been all dark and gloomy, — my
 ‘ anxieties are unutterable, — intollerable ; — I
 ‘ know not what cruel constructions you may put
 ‘ upon the petition I made you, of not mention-
 ‘ ing me to your brothers ; — but sure you cannot

‘ think I apprehend a refusal from that quarter : —
 ‘ no, — my birth and fortune set me above all
 ‘ doubts of that nature, and I am very certain,
 ‘ that both they, and all your kindred, would ra-
 ‘ ther force you, if in your power, to accept the
 ‘ hand I offer ; but it is not to them, but to your-
 ‘ self alone I can submit to yield. — Heaven,
 ‘ ’tis true, is in possessing you, but then I would
 ‘ owe that heaven only to your love ; — you may
 ‘ think, perhaps, that this is too great a delicacy,
 ‘ but know, fair angel, that there is another motive,
 ‘ a motive, which, though derived from the same
 ‘ source, binds me in a different way. — Fain would
 ‘ I court you, — fain marry you with all the pomp
 ‘ and splendor your superior beauty merits ; but
 ‘ neither my virtue, my honour, nor my religion
 ‘ will permit it — the mystery is this :

‘ Upon examining into the cause, why we see
 ‘ so many jarring pairs united in the sacred yoke
 ‘ of matrimony, I found it wholly owing to the
 ‘ want of that true affection, which, to make per-
 ‘ fect happiness, ought to precede the nuptial ce-
 ‘ remony, — that sordid interest, — the persuasions
 ‘ of friends, or some such selfish view, either on
 ‘ the one side or the other, had given the hand
 ‘ without the heart, and inclination had no share
 ‘ in beckoning to the altar.

‘ Being convinced of this truth by innumerable
 ‘ examples, and resolved to avoid the fate of
 ‘ others, I made a vow, and bound myself by the
 ‘ most solemn imprecations never to marry any wo-
 ‘ man, how dear soever she might be to me, that
 ‘ would not assure me of her love, by flying pri-
 ‘ vately with me to the altar, without consulting
 ‘ friends, or asking any advice, but of her own
 ‘ soft desires.

‘ This, my adorable charmer, being the case, I
 ‘ am certain you have too high a sense of the duty
 ‘ owing

owing to all that's holy, to exact from me a thing which you cannot be but certain, must entail eternal perdition on my perjured soul.

Let us haste then to tie the blissful knot, and surprise our friends with a marriage they little dreamed of. — As Phœbus each night hurries himself into the lap of Thetis, to render his appearance more welcome the next day, so shall the next morning, after our marriage, behold us shine forth at once no less gorgeous than the bright ruler of the day, dazzling the eyes of the admiring world.

I am fired with the imagination, and am wrapped in extasies unutterable, — but will fly this evening to your divine feet, where I hope to persuade you to delay our mutual happiness no longer than to-morrow, and exchange my present appellation of lover into that of husband, assuring yourself I shall then be, as now, with the most consummate devotion to your all-conquering charms,

Sweet goddess of my hopes,

Your passionate adorer,

And everlasting slave, F. FINEER.

P. S. I beseech you will give necessary orders for preventing any impertinent intruder from breaking in upon our converse, for, exclusive of my vow, I should detest, as the poet says, With noise and shew, and in a crowd to wooe, For true felicity dwells but in two.

Once more, my dear divinity, — adieu.

Miss Betsy read this letter over several times, and made herself mistress of the sense, as she thought, of every part of it; — She had always found, in every thing he said or did, a great deal of the affected and conceited coxcomb; but in this, she imagined he discovered more of the designing knave: — the vow he mentioned was an excuse

excuse too shallow to pass on a discernment such as her's; but her vanity still suggesting, that he was really in love with her, and that if he intended any villainy towards her, it was enforced by the violence of his passion, it came into her head; that there was a possibility of his being already married, or contracted, to some lady, whom he durst not break with, but being bent on gaining her at all events, he had formed this pretence of a vow; in order to gain her to a clandestine marriage thinking, that after it was over, and there was no remedy, she would be content to live with him in a private manner, since it would then be impracticable for her to do so in a public one.

This indeed she could not be certain of, but she was so, that it did not become a woman of any family and character to receive the addresses of a man, how superior soever he might be in point of fortune, who either was ashamed, or had any other reasons to hinder him from avowing his passion to her relations.

She resolved therefore to put an end at once to a courtship, which, however high her Expectations at first had been, she now saw no probability would afford her either honour or satisfaction.

She had no sooner fixed herself in this determination, than she went to her cabinet, with an intent to pack up all the letters she had received from him, and enclose them in one to Mrs. Modely; but recollecting, she had given one of them to her brother Frank, which he had not yet returned, she thought she would defer, 'till another opportunity, this testimony of the disregard she had for himself, and all that came from him.

To prevent, however, his troubling her with any more visits, messages, or epistles, she sat down to her *escrutore*, and immediately wrote her present

sent sentiments to his agent, in the following terms :

To Mrs. MODELY.

Dear Modely,

AS it is not my custom to write to men, except on business, of which I never reckon'd love, nor the professions of it, any part, I desire you will tell sir Frederick Fineer, that the only way for him to keep his oath inviolated, is to cease entirely all farther prosecution of his addresses to me ; for as my birth and fortune, as well as my humour, set me above encouraging a secret correspondence with any man, on what pretence soever it may be requested ; he may expect, nay assure himself, that on the next visit he attempts to make me, or letter or message he causes to be left for me, I shall directly acquaint my brothers with the whole story of his courtship, the novelty of which may possibly afford us some diversion.

I thank you for the good I believe you intended me, in your recommendation of a lover, whose title and estate you might think had some charms in them, and the oddities of whose temper you were perhaps unacquainted with.

I desire, however, you will henceforward make no mention of him, but, whenever I send for you confine your conversation to such matters as befits your vocation, for as to others I find you are but little skilled in what will please her, who is,

Notwithstanding this raillery,

My dear Modely,

Your friend and servant,

B. THOUGHTLESS.

P. S. To shew how much I am in earnest, I should have sent the baronet all the epistles he has been at the pains of writing to me ;
but

‘but I am just going out, and have not leisure to
 ‘look them up; — I will not fail, however,
 ‘to let him have them in a day or two: —
 ‘they may serve any other woman as well as
 ‘me, and save him abundance of trouble in his
 ‘next courtship. — You see I have some good-
 ‘nature, though nothing of that love I sup-
 ‘pose he imagined his merits had inspired me
 ‘with. — Adieu.’

Miss Betsey was highly diverted, after sending this dispatch, to think how silly poor Modely would look, on finding herself obliged to deliver such a message to her grand lodger, and how dismally mortified he would be on the receiving it.

C H A P. XIV.

Shews that Miss Betsey, whenever she pleased to exert herself, had it in her power to be discreet, even on occasions the most tempting to her humour and inclination.

SOON after Miss Betsey had sent away what she thought would be a final answer to sir Frederick, her brother Frank came in; — she immediately shewed him the letter she had received that morning, and related to him in what manner she had behaved concerning it, with which he was extremely pleased, and said more tender things to her, than any she had heard from him, since he came to town.

‘This is a way of acting, my dear sister,’ said he, ‘which if you persevere in, will infallibly gain you the esteem of all who know you; for while you encourage the addresses of every idle fop, believe me, you will render yourself cheap, and lose all your merit with the sensible part of mankind.’

If she was not quite of his opinion in this point, she offered no arguments in opposition to the remarks he had made, and assured him, as she had done once before, that she would never give any man the least grounds to hope she approved his pretensions, 'till she had first received the sanction of both his and her brother Thoughtless's approbation.

He then told her, that they had received intelligence, that the India ship, which they heard was to bring Mr. Edward Goodman, was safely arrived in the Downs; so that in all likelihood that gentleman would be in London in two or three days at farthest; — 'which I am very glad of,' said he; 'for though I believe the lawyer a very honest, diligent man as any can be of his profession, the presence of the heir will give a life to the cause, and may bring things to a more speedy issue.'

He also told her, that a gentleman of his brother's acquaintance had the day before received a letter from sir Ralph Trusty, intimating, that he should be obliged, by the death of Mr. Goodman, where being affairs of consequence between them, to come to town much sooner than he had intended, and that he should bring his lady with him: —

'And then, my dear sister,' said he, 'you will be happy for a time at least, in the conversation and advice of one, who, I am certain, in her good wishes for you, deserves to be looked upon by you as a second mother.'

He was going on in some farther commendations of that worthy lady, when Miss Betsy's man came to the dining room door, and told her, that Mr. Munden was below in the parlour, and would wait on her, if she was at leisure. — Mr. Francis perceiving she was hesitating what answer to make, cried hastily, 'pray sister admit him: — this is
' lucky,

‘ lucky, now I shall see how much he excells Mr. Trueworth in person and parts. — ‘ I never told you,’ answered she, ‘ that he did so in either ; but perhaps he may in his good opinion and esteem for me ; — however, I think you promised never to mention Trueworth again to me ; — I wish you would keep your word.’ — ‘ Well, — I have done,’ said he, ‘ do not keep the gentleman waiting.’ — On which she bade her footman desire Mr. Munden to walk up.

That gentleman was a good deal disconcerted in his mind, concerning the little progress his courtship had made with miss Betsy ; — he had followed her for a considerable time, — been at a great expence in treating and making presents to her ; — he had studied her humour, and done every thing in his power to please her, yet thought himself as far from the completion of his wishes, as when he began his addresses to her ; — he had not for several days had an opportunity of speaking one word to her in private ; — she was either abroad when he came, or so engaged in company, that his presence served only to fill a vacant seat in her dining-room ; — he therefore determined to know what fate he was to expect from her.

As he had not been told any body was now with her, and had never seen Mr. Francis before, he was a little startled on his coming into the room, to find a young, gay gentleman seated very near her, and lolling his arm, in a careless posture, over the back of the chair in which she was sitting ; — on his entrance, they both rose to receive him with a great deal of politeness, which he returned in the same manner ; but added to the first compliments, that he hoped he had been guilty of no intrusion.

‘ Not at all, sir,’ replied the brother of Miss Betsy, ‘ I was only talking to my sister on some family

'family affairs, which we may resume at any time, when no more agreeable subjects of entertainment fall in our way.' — 'Yes, Mr. Munden,' said Miss Betsy, 'this is that brother, whose return to town you so often heard me wish for: — and this, brother,' continued she, turning to Mr. Francis, 'is a gentleman who sometimes does me the honour of calling upon me, and whose visits to me I believe you will not disapprove.'

She had no sooner ended these words than the two gentlemen mutually advanced, embraced, and said they should be proud of each others acquaintance; after which they entered into a conversation sprightly enough for the time it lasted, which was not long; for Mr. Francis-looking on his watch said, he was extremely mortified to leave such good company, but business of a very urgent nature called him to a different place at that hour.

As much as Mr. Munden was pleased to find himself so obligingly introduced by his mistress, to the acquaintance of her brother, he was equally glad to be rid of him at this juncture, when he came prepared to press her so home to an eclairecissement, as should deprive her of all possibility of keeping himself any longer in suspense.

It was in vain for her now to have recourse to any of those evasions by which she had hitherto put him off, and she found herself under a necessity either of entirely discarding him, or giving him some kind of assurance, that the continuance of his pretensions would not be in vain.

Never had she been so plunged before — never had any of her lovers insisted in such plain terms on her declaring herself, and she was compelled, as it were, to tell him, since he was so impatient for the definition of his fate, it was from her brothers he must receive it, for she was resolved, nay had solemnly promised, to enter

into no engagement without their knowledge and approbation. — ‘But suppose,’ said he, ‘I should be so happy as to obtain their consent, may I then assure myself you will be mine?’ — ‘Would you wish me to hate you,’ cried she, somewhat peevishly? — ‘Hate me!’ answered he; — ‘no, madam, it is your love I would purchase, almost at the expence of life.’

‘Persecute me then no more,’ said she, ‘to give you promises or assurances, which would only make me see you with confusion, and think of you with regret; — it is sufficient I esteem you, and listen to the professions of your love, — let that content you, and leave to myself the grant of more.’ — ‘Yet, madam,’ resumed he, — and was going on, but was interrupted by the maid, who came hastily into the room, and said, ‘Madam, here is Miss Mabel.’

She had no sooner spoke these words, than the lady she mentioned followed her into the room. — Miss Betsey was never more glad to see her than now, when her presence afforded her so seasonable a relief: — ‘My dear miss Mabel,’ said she, ‘this is kind indeed, when I already owe you two visits.’ — ‘I believe you owe me more,’ answered she, with a smile; ‘but I did not come to reproach you, — nor can this indeed be justly called a visit, since it is only a meer matter of business brings me hither at this time.’

Mr. Munden on this thought proper to take his leave, but, in doing so, said to Miss Betsey, with a very grave air, — ‘I hope, madam, you will have the goodness to consider seriously on what we have been talking of: — I will do myself the honour to wait upon your brothers to-morrow, and afterwards on yourself.’ — With these words he withdrew without staying for any answer.

‘I know

‘I know not,’ said Miss Mabel, after he was gone, ‘whether what I have to say to you will be of sufficient moment to excuse me for depriving you of your company, — since I only called to tell you, that we are eased of our little pensioner, at Denham, by the father’s unexpectedly coming to claim his own.’

Miss Betsy replied, that she guessed as much, for she had heard those people had been at her lodgings, when she was not at home, and had said somewhat of their business to her servant. — ‘I am also to pay you,’ resumed the other, ‘my quota of the last month’s nursing.’ — In speaking these words she took out of her pocket the little sum she stood indebted for, and laid it on the table.

Though Miss Betsy had the most perfect regard and good wishes for Miss Mabel, and Miss Mabel the same for Miss Betsy, yet neither of them was in the secrets of the other: — they visited but seldom, and when they did, talked only on indifferent affairs. — In fine, though they both loved the amiable qualities each found in the other, yet the wide contrariety between their dispositions, occasioned a coolness in their behaviour, which their hearts were far from feeling.

Miss Mabel stayed but a very few minutes, after having dispatched the business she came upon, nor was Miss Betsy at all troubled at her departure, being at present, what she very rarely was, in a humour rather to be alone than in any company whatever.

She no sooner was at liberty than she began to reflect on the transactions of that morning; — she had done two things, which seemed pretty extraordinary to her; — she had entirely dismissed one lover, a piece of resolution she did not a little value herself upon, but then she was vexed at the

too great encouragement, as she thought it, which she had given to another.

‘What shall I do with this Munden?’ said she to herself. — ‘If my brothers should take it into their heads to approve of his pretensions, I shall be as much teased on his account, as I was on that of Mr. Truworth’s: — I have no aversion indeed to the man, but I am equally as far from having any love for him; — there is nothing in his person, or behaviour, that might make a woman ashamed of being his wife, yet I can see nothing so extraordinary in him, as to induce me to become so.’

‘Why then,’ continued she, ‘did I not tell him at once I would not have him, and that if he was weary of paying his respects to me, he might carry them where they would be more kindly received? — It was a very silly thing in me to send him to my brothers, — they are in such haste to get me out of the way of what they call temptation, that I believe they would marry me to any man; that was of a good family and had an estate. — If I must needs have a husband to please them, I had better have taken Truworth, — I am sure there is no comparison between the men; but it is too late to think of that now, for it is very plain, both by his behaviour to me when last I saw him, and by what he said to my brother Frank, that he has given over all intentions on that score.’

She was in the midst of these cogitations, when a servant belonging to the ladies whom she visited at St. James’s, came and presented her with a letter, containing these lines:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘Dear creature,

‘MY sister and self had an invitation to a party of pleasure, where there will be the best company

‘ company, — the best musick, and the best entertainment in the world ; but my father having
 ‘ unluckily forced her to pass some days with an
 ‘ old aunt, who lies dangerously sick at Hampstead, I know nobody can so well supply her vacant place, as your agreeable self ; — therefore,
 ‘ if you are not already too deeply engaged this evening, would beg the favour of you to share
 ‘ with me in the proposed diversion, — we shall
 ‘ have two young gentlemen of rank for our conductors and protectors ; — but I flatter myself
 ‘ you will make no scruple to go any where with
 ‘ her, who is,

‘ With the most perfect amity,

‘ Dear Miss Betsy,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ A. AIRISH.

‘ P. S. Let me know whether I can be so happy
 ‘ as to have you with me, and if so, I will call
 ‘ on you about five, and drink tea, for we shall
 ‘ not go to the assembly till eight.’

This proposal put Miss Betsy out of all her serious reflections, and she returned for answer to the lady, that she would not fail to be at home; and ready to attend her at the appointed hour.

Accordingly, as soon as ever dinner was over, she went to dress, and thought of nothing but how to make as brilliant a figure as any she should meet with at the assembly. — Miss Airish came somewhat before the hour she had mentioned in her letter, accompanied by two rakes of quality, whom Miss Betsy had seen two or three times before with her and her sister, and by one of whom she had once been treated with some familiarities, which had made her ever since very cautious of giving him any opportunity to attempt the like.

As much, therefore, as she had pleased herself with the idea of this evening's pleasures, she no sooner saw who were to be their conductors, than she resolved not to put herself into their powers, yet knew not how, without affronting Miss Airish, to avoid complying with the promises she had made of accompanying her.

They all came singing and romping into the room, but the perplexity of Miss Betsey's mind made her receive them with a very serious air: — the men accosted her with a freedom conformable enough to their own characters, but not very agreeable to one of her's, and she rebuffed with a good deal of contempt him, with whom she had most reason to be offended.

'Lord! how grave you look,' said Miss Airish, observing her countenance; 'prithee, my dear creature, put on a more chearful aspect: — this is to be a night of all spirit, — all mirth, — all gaiety.' — 'I am sorry I cannot be partaker of it,' said Miss Betsey, who, by this time, had contrived an excuse. — 'Lord! what do you mean? — not partaker of it!' cried Miss Airish, hastily; — 'sure you would not offer to disappoint us?' — 'Not willingly,' replied Miss Betsey; 'but I was just going to send to let you know, I have received a message from my elder brother, to come to his house, in order to meet some persons there, on very extraordinary business; — but, I hope,' added she, 'that my not going will be no hindrance to the diversion you propose.'

'It would have been none, madam,' said one of the gallants, 'if this assembly were like others; but we are only a select company of gay young fellows, who resolve to try how far nature may be exhilarated by regaling every sense at once: — to prevent all quarrels, every man is to bring
' a lady

‘a lady with him, who is to be his partner in singing, — dancing, — playing, — or whatever they two shall agree upon. — We two,’ continued he, ‘pitched upon the two Miss Airishes, but one of them being gone another way, we thought of you, otherwise we could have found ladies who would have obliged us.’

‘Very likely,’ replied Miss Betsey, ‘and I suppose it may not yet be too late to seek them.’ — ‘But I had rather have you than all the world,’ cried he, that Miss Betsey was most apprehensive of, ‘you know I have always shewn a particular tendre for you; — therefore prithee,’ continued he, catching her in his arms, and eagerly kissing her, ‘my dear girl, send some excuse to your brother, and let us have you with us.’

‘Unhand me, my lord,’ cried she, struggling to get loose, — ‘what you ask is impossible, for I neither can nor will go.’ — The resolution with which she spoke these words, and the anger which at the same time sparkled in her eyes, made them see it would be but lost labour to endeavour to persuade her; they looked one at another, and were confounded what to do, till Miss Airish, vexed to the very heart at Miss Betsey’s behaviour, hit upon an expedient to solve up the matter: — ‘Well,’ said she, ‘since Miss Betsey cannot go, I will introduce your lordship to a young lady, who, I am sure, will not refuse us; — besides, I know she is at home, for I saw her looking out of her chamber window as we came by; — but we must go directly, that she may have time to dress.’

On this, they both cried with all their hearts, and one of them taking her hand skipped down stairs with her, in the same wild way they came up: — the other followed, only turning his head towards Miss Betsey, cried, with a malicious sneer, ‘How

‘How unregarded now that piece of beauty
‘stands!’...

Miss Betsey, though sufficiently piqued, was very glad to get rid of them, and the more so that by their happening to call on her, instead of her meeting them at Miss Airish’s apartment, she had the better opportunity of excusing herself from going where they desired.

CHAP. XV.

The terrible consequences, which may possibly attend our placing too great a dependance on persons whose principles we are not well assured of, are here exemplified, in a notable act of villainy and hypocrisy.

MISS Betsey no sooner found herself alone, than she began to reflect very seriously on the preceding passage:—she knew very little of these two young noblemen, yet thought she saw enough in their behaviour to make any woman, who had the least regard for her honour or reputation, fearful to trust herself with them in any place, where both might be so much endangered;—she was, therefore, very much amazed, that Miss Airish should run so great a risque, and to find that she did so, joined to some other things, which she had of late observed in the conduct of both the sisters, contributed to diminish the love and esteem she once had for them.

She found, however, too many objects of satisfaction in the visits she made to those ladies, to be willing to break acquaintance with them, and as she doubted not but that she had highly obliged the one, by not complying with her invitation, and that this would infallibly occasion a rupture with the other also, if not in time reconciled,

ciled, she went the next morning to their apartment, in order to make her peace.

On her enquiring for that lady, the footman told her, she was but just come home, and he believed was going to-bed, but he would tell the chamber-maid she was there. — ‘No, — no,’ cried Miss Betsy, ‘only give my compliments to your lady, and tell her, I will wait on her in the afternoon.’ — She was going away with these words, but Miss Airish, lying on the same floor, heard her voice, and called to her to come in.

Miss Betsy did as she was desired, and found her in a much better humour than she expected. — ‘O, my dear,’ said she, what a night have you lost by not being with us! — Such a promiscuous enjoyment of every thing that can afford delight or satisfaction! — Well, after all, there is nothing like playing the rake a little sometimes, — it gives such a fillup to the spirits.’

‘Provided it be innocent, I am of your mind,’ replied miss Betsy; — ‘I suppose every thing was managed with decency among you.’ — ‘O quite so,’ cried the other; — ‘all harmless libertinism: — ’tis true, there were private rooms; but you know one might chuse whether one would go into them or not.’ — ‘I am not sure of that,’ said miss Betsy: — ‘I am glad however you were so well pleased with your entertainment, and equally so, that you were not hindered from enjoying it, by my not being able to share with you in it.’

‘I am obliged to you, my dear,’ replied Miss Airish, — ‘I was a little vexed with you at first, indeed, but knew you could not help it; — the lady we called upon went very readily with us, so as it happened there was no disappointment in the case.’

‘It was only to be convinced of that,’ said Miss Betsey, ‘that I came hither thus early; but I will now take my leave, — repose I am sure is necessary for you, after so many waking hours.’ — The other did not oppose her departure, being in effect desirous of taking that rest, which her exhausted spirits wanted.

Never had Miss Betsey felt within herself a greater or more sincere satisfaction, than she now did, for having so prudently avoided falling into inconveniencies, the least of which, as she very rightly judged, would have been paying too dear a price for all the pleasures she could have received.

Sweet indeed are the reflections, which flow from a consciousness of having done what virtue, and the duty owing to the character we bear in life, exacted from us, but poor Miss Betsey was not to enjoy, for any long time, so happy a tranquillity; — she was roused out of this serenity of mind, by an adventure of a different kind from all she had ever yet experienced, and which, if she were not properly guarded against, it ought to be imputed rather to the unsuspecting goodness of her heart, than to her vanity, or that inadvertency, which had occasioned her former mistakes.

She was sitting near the window, leaning her arm upon the slab, very deep in contemplation, when, hearing a coach stop at the door, she looked out, imagining it might be somebody to her, and saw Mrs. Modely come out; — she wondered what business that woman should now come upon, after the letter she had sent her, and resolved to chide her for any impertinent message she should deliver.

Mrs. Modely, whose profession was known to the people of the house, always ran up without any other ceremony than asking if Miss Betsey

was

was at home and alone : — being now told she was so, she flew into the room, with a distraction in her countenance which very much surprised Miss Betsy ; but before she had time to ask the meaning, the other throwing herself down in a chair, increased her astonishment by these words :

‘ O ! madam,’ cried she, ‘ I am come to tell you of the saddest accident : — poor sir Frederick Finer ! — O that he had never seen you ! — O that I had never meddled between you ! — I am undone, that is to be sure, — ruined for ever : — I shall never get another lodger, — nay, I believe, I shall never recover the fright I am in.’

Here she burst into a violent fit of tears, and her sobs interrupting the passage of her words, gave Miss Betsy opportunity to enquire into the mystery of her behaviour : — ‘ For heaven’s sake,’ what is the matter,’ said that young lady ? ‘ prithee cease these exclamations, and speak to be understood.’

‘ Ah, dear Miss Betsy,’ resumed the other, ‘ I scarce know what I say or do, — poor sir Frederick has run himself quite through the body.’ — ‘ What ! killed himself,’ cried Miss Betsy hastily ? — ‘ He is not dead yet,’ replied Mrs. Modely ; ‘ but there he lies the most dismal object that ever eyes beheld : — the agonies of death in his face, — the sword sticking in his breast ; for the surgeon says, that the moment that is drawn out, his life comes with it.’

Perceiving Miss Betsy said nothing, and looked a little troubled, she went on in this manner : — ‘ But this is not the worst I have to tell you, madam,’ continued she, — ‘ his death is nothing ; but it is his soul, — his soul, Miss Betsy : — hearing them say he could not live above three hours at most, I sent for a parson, — and there

‘ the

‘the good man fits and talks, and argues with him; — but, would you think it, he will not pray, — nor be prayed for, — nor confess his sins, — nor say he is sorry for what he has done, — nor do any thing that is right, till he has seen you.’

‘Me!’ said Miss Betsey, ‘what would he see me for?’ — ‘Nay, I know not, — but it is his whim, and he is obstinate, — therefore, my dear madam, in christian charity, and in compassion to his soul, hear what he has to say.’

‘What good can I do him by going Mrs. Modely,’ said Miss Betsey? — none, as to his share in ‘this world,’ answered she; — ‘but, dear madam, consider the other, — think what a sad thing it is for a man to die without the rites of the church; — I’ll warrant he has sins enough upon him, as most young gentlemen have, and sure you would not be the cause of his being ‘miserable to all eternity!’

‘Indeed, Mrs. Modely, I do not care to go,’ said Miss Betsey. — ‘The sight is very terrible indeed,’ cried the other, ‘but you need not stay two minutes, — if you but just step in and speak to him, I fancy it will be enough; — but lord he may be dead while we are talking, and if he should leave the world in this manner, I should not be able to live in my house, — and I have a lease of eleven years to come, — I should think I saw his ghost in every room; — so dear, dear Miss Betsey, for my sake, if not for his, go with me; — I came in a hackney-coach for haste, and it is still at the door.’

‘Well, Modely, you shall prevail,’ answered Miss Betsey; ‘but you shall stay in the room all the time I am there.’ — ‘That you may be sure I will,’ returned the other; — ‘but come, — pray heaven we are not too late.’

They

They said little more to each other, 'till they came to the house of Mrs. Modely, where the first sound that reached the ears of Miss Betsy, were groans, which seemed to issue from the mouth of a person in the pangs of death.

Mrs. Modely led her into Sir Frederick's chamber, which was judiciously darkened, so as to leave light enough to discern objects, yet not so much as to render them too perspicuous:—Miss Betsy saw him lying on the bed, as Mrs. Modely described, with a sword sticking upright in his breast, — a clergyman, and another person, who appeared to be the surgeon, were sitting near him. — 'Miss Betsy is so good,' said Mrs. Modely, 'to come to visit you, sir Frederick.' — 'I am glad of it,' replied he, with a low voice, — 'pray, madam, approach.'

'I am sorry, sir Frederick, to find you have been guilty of so rash an action,' said Miss Betsy, drawing towards the bed. — 'I could not live without you,' rejoined he, 'nor would die without leaving you as happy as it is in my power to make you; — I have settled two thousand pounds a year upon you, during your natural life; — but as I would consult your honour in every thing I do, and people might imagine I made you this settlement in consideration of some favours, which I had too true a regard for you ever to desire, you must enjoy it as my widow, and with it the title of lady Fincer.'

Miss Betsy was so much amazed at this proposal, that she had not the power to speak; but Mrs. Modely cried out, 'Was ever any thing so generous!' — 'Truly noble indeed,' added the surgeon, 'and worthy of himself, and the love he has for this lady.' — 'Bless me!' said Miss Betsy, 'would you have me marry a dying man? — You

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‘ought, sir Frederick, to have other thoughts, as you are going out of the world.’

‘Aye, sir Frederick,’ cried the parson, ‘think of your immortal part.’—‘I can think of nothing,’ answered he, groaning bitterly, ‘of my own happiness, ’till I have fixed that of Miss Betsy’s.’—‘Lord, madam,’ cried Mrs. Modely, softly, ‘you would not be so mad to refuse:—what two thousand pounds a year, and a ladyship, with liberty to marry who you will?’

‘This is the most generous offer I ever heard of,’ said the parson; ‘but I wish the lady would resolve soon, for it is high time sir Frederick should prepare for another world.’—‘He cannot live above an hour,’ rejoined the surgeon, ‘even if the sword is not withdrawn;—therefore, good madam, think what you have to do.’

While they were speaking sir Frederick redoubled his groans, and they went on pressing her to accept the terms he offered:—‘Do not plunge a man into a sad eternity, merely for his love to you,’ said the parson.—‘All the world would condemn you, should you refuse,’ cried the surgeon.—‘A virgin widow with two thousand pounds a year,’ added Mrs. Modely.

In this manner did they urge her, and the parson getting on the one side of her, and the surgeon on the other, plied her so close with arguments, both on the advantages accruing to herself, and the compassion owing from her to a gentleman, who had committed this act of desperation on himself, meerly through his love of her, that she neither could, nor knew how to make any answer, when sir Frederick giving two or three great groans, which seemed more deep than before, and the surgeon pretending to take miss Betsy’s silence for consent, cried out, ‘Madam, he is just going,—we must be speedy.’ And then turning

ing to the parson, 'Doctor,' said he, proceed to the ceremony, — pass over the prelude, and begin at the most essential part, else my patient won't live to the conclusion.'

The parson knew very well what he had to do, having his book ready, began at — 'sir Frederick Fineer, baronet, wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?' — and so on. — To which sir Frederick answered, in the same dismal accents he had hitherto spoken, 'I will.' — Then the parson turning to Miss Betsy, said, 'Betsy Thoughtless, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?' — and so forth. — Miss Betsy in the confusion of her mind, not well knowing what she said, or did, replied in the affirmative, on which he was hurrying over the rest of the ceremony, but she recollecting herself, cried out, — 'Hold, doctor, I cannot be married in this manner.' — But he seemed not to regard her words, but read on, and the surgeon taking hold of her hand, and joining it with sir Frederick's, held it in spite of her resistance, 'till the ring was forced upon her finger.

This action so incensed her, that the instant she got her hand at liberty, she plucked off the ring, and threw it on the ground: — 'What do you mean,' said she? — Do you think to compel me to a marriage? — Modely, you have not used me well.' — With these words she was turning to go out of the room, but perceived, not till then, that Mrs. Modely had slipped out, and that the door was locked; — she then began to call, 'Mrs. Modely, — Mrs. Modely:' to which no answer was made.

'Come, come, madam,' said the surgeon, 'this passion will avail you nothing; — you are effectually married, whatever you may imagine to the contrary.' 'Yes, yes,' rejoined the parson, 'the

‘the ceremony is good and firm:— I will stand to what I have done before any bishop in England.’ — ‘There wants only consummation,’ cried the surgeon, ‘and that we must leave the bridegroom to compleat before he dies.’ — With these words they both went out, making the door fast after them.

Miss Betsey made use of her utmost efforts to pass at the same time they did, but they pushed her back with so much violence, as almost threw her down, and sir Frederick at the same time jumping off the bed, and throwing away the sword, which she imagined sheathed in his body, caught her suddenly in his arms.

‘Tis hard to say, whether rage for the imposition she now found had been practised on her, or the terror for the danger she was in, was the passion now most predominant in the soul of Miss Betsey; but both together served to inspire her with unusual strength and courage.

‘Your resistance is in vain,’ cried he, ‘you are my wife, and as such I shall enjoy you:— no matter whether with your will or not.’ — She made no answer to these words, but collecting all her force, sprung from him, and catching hold of one of the posts at the bed’s foot, clung so fast round it, that all his endeavours to remove her thence were ineffectual for some moments, though the rough means he made use of for that purpose, were very near breaking both her arms.

Breathless at last, however, with the continual shrieks she had sent out for help, and the violence she had sustained by the efforts of that abandoned wretch, who had as little regard to the tenderness of her sex, as to any other principle of humanity, she fell almost fainting on the floor; and was on the point of becoming a victim to the most wicked stratagem that ever was invented, when on a sudden

sudden the door of the chamber was burst open, and a man, with his sword drawn, at that instant rushed in upon them.

‘Monster!’ cried he, that entered, what act of villainy are you about to perpetrate?’ — Miss Betsy rising from the ground at the same time, said to him, — ‘Oh! whoever you are, that heaven has sent to my deliverance, save me, I conjure you, from that horrid wretch.’ — Fear nothing, madam,’ answered he. He had time for no more, the intended ravisher had snatched up his sword, and was advancing towards him with these words, ‘That woman is my wife,’ said he; ‘how dare any one interfere between us?’ — ‘O,’ ’tis false! — ’tis false! — believe him not,’ cried Miss Betsy. — Her protector made no reply, but flying at his antagonist, immediately closed with him, wrenched the sword out of his hand, which, throwing on the ground, he set his foot upon, and snapped it in pieces.

The obscurity of the room, joined to the excessive agitations Miss Betsy was in, had, till now, hindered her from discovering, either by the voice or person, who it was to whom she owed her safety; on his drawing back one of the window curtains to give more light into the place, that he might see with whom he had been engaged, she presently saw, to her great amazement and confusion, that her deliverer was no other than Mr. Trueworth.

But how great soever was her astonishment, that of Mr. Trueworth was not less, when looking on the face of the pretended sir Frederick Fineer, he presently knew him to be a fellow, who had served in quality of valet de chambre to a gentleman he was acquainted with in France, who had robbed his master, and only through his lenity and compassion had avoided the punishment his crimes deserved.

‘Rascal!’ cried Mr. Truworth, ‘have you escaped breaking on the wheel at Paris, to attempt deeds more deserving death in England.’ — The wretch, who hitherto had behaved with a very lofty air, now finding he was discovered, fell at Mr. Truworth’s feet, and begged he would have mercy on him; — alledged, that what he had done was occasioned by mere necessity; — said, he was told the lady had a great fortune, and might be easily gained, and such like stuff, which putting Mr. Truworth beyond all patience, he gave him three or four blows with the flat of his sword, before he sheathed it, saying at the same time, ‘Execrable dog! — if thou wert not unworthy of death from any hand but that of the common hangman, thou shouldst not live a moment to boast the least acquaintance with this lady.’ — Then turning to Miss Betsey, who was half dying with the various emotions she was possessed of: — ‘Madam,’ said he, ‘I will not ask by what means you came into this villain’s company, only permit me to conduct you hence; and see you safely home.’

Miss Betsey was seized with so violent a fit of trembling through all her frame, that she had neither voice to thank him, for the extraordinary assistance she had received from him; nor strength enough to bear her down stairs, if he had not with the greatest politeness and most tender care, supported her at every step she took.

They found no creature below, the house seemed as if forsaken by all its inhabitants; but the parlour door being open, Mr. Truworth placed his fair charge in an easy chair, while he ran to find somebody to get a coach.

After much knocking and calling, Mrs. Modely came out of a back-room, into that where Miss Betsey was. — As soon as that young lady saw her,

her, 'Oh, Mrs. Modely,' cried she, 'I could not have believed you would have betrayed me in this cruel manner.' — 'Bless me! madam,' replied she, in a confusion, which she in vain endeavoured to conceal; — 'I know not what you mean. — I betray you! — When you were talking with sir Frederick I was sent for out, — when I came back, indeed, I saw the parson and the surgeon pass through the entry in a hurry, and at the same time hearing a great noise, was going up as soon as I had pulled off my things; but I hope,' continued she, in a whining tone, 'nothing has happened to my dear Miss Betsy.' — 'Whatever has happened,' said Mr. Truworth, fiercely, 'will be inquired into; — in the mean time, all we require of you is to send somebody for a coach.'

Mrs. Modely then ringing a bell, a maid-servant appeared, and what Mr. Truworth had requested was immediately performed; but, though Miss Betsy now saw herself safe from the mischief which had so lately threatened her, she had still emotions very terrible to sustain, and would have, doubtless, thrown her into a swoon, if not vented in a violent flood of tears.

Being arrived at the house where Miss Betsy lodged, just as Mr. Truworth was helping her out of the coach, they were met by the two Mr. Thoughtless's coming out of the door: — they started back at a sight, which, it must be confessed, had something very alarming in it; — they beheld their sister all pale and trembling, — her eyes half-drowned in tears, — her garments torn, — her hair hanging loosely wild about her neck and face, — every token of despair about her, — and in this condition conducted by a gentleman, a stranger indeed to the one, but known by the other to have been once passionately in love with her,

her, might well occasion odd sort of apprehensions in both the brothers, especially in the younger.

The sudden sight of her brothers, made a fresh attack on the already so much weakened spirits of Miss Betsey, and she would have sunk on the threshold of the door, as Mr. Truworth quitted her hand in order to present it to Mr. Francis, if the elder Mr. Thoughtless, seeing her totter, had not that instant caught her in his arms.

‘Confusion!’ cried Mr. Francis, ‘what does all this mean? — Truworth is it thus you bring my sister home?’ — ‘I am heartily sorry for the occasion,’ — said Mr. Truworth, ‘since’ — he was going on, but Mr. Francis, fired with a mistaken rage, prevented him, crying out, ‘Sdeath, sir, how came you with my sister?’ — Mr. Truworth, a little provoked to find the service he had done so ill requited, replied in a disdainful tone, ‘she will inform you, — after that, if you have any farther demands upon me, you know where I am to be found; — I have no leisure now to answer your interrogatories.’

With these words he stepped hastily into the coach, and ordered to be drove to the two red lamps in Golden Square.

Miss Betsey’s senses were entirely lost for some moments, so that she knew nothing of what had passed: — Mr. Francis hearing what directions Mr. Truworth had given the coachman, was for following and forcing him to an explanation, but the elder Mr. Thoughtless prevailed on him to stay till they should hear what their sister would say on this affair.

She was carried into her apartment, rather dead than alive, but being laid on a settee, and proper means applied, she soon returned to a condition capable of satisfying their curiosity.

C H A P. XVI.

Will not tire the reader.

MISS Betsy having her heart and head full of the obligation she had to Mr. Truworth, and on the first recovery of her senses, thinking he was still near her, cried out, — ‘Oh! Mr Truworth, how shall I thank the goodness you have shewn me! — I have no words to do it, — it is from my brothers you must receive those demonstrations of gratitude, which are not in my power to give.’

The brothers looked sometimes on her, and sometimes on each other, with a good deal of surprise all the time she was speaking, ’till perceiving she had done, — ‘To whom are you talking, sister?’ said Mr. Francis, ‘here is no body but my brother and myself.’

‘Bless me!’ cried she, looking round the room, ‘how wild my head is! — I knew not where I was, — I thought myself still in the house of that wicked woman that betrayed me, and saw my generous deliverer chastising the monster that attempted my destruction.’

‘Who was that monster?’ demanded the elder Mr. Thoughtless, hastily. — ‘A villain without a name,’ said she, ‘for that of sir Frederick Fineer was but assumed, to hide a common cheat! — a robber!’ — ‘And who, say you,’ rejoined Mr. Francis, ‘was your deliverer?’ ‘Who, but that best of men!’ answered she, ‘Mr. Truworth! — O, brothers, if you have any regard for me, or for the honour of our family, you can never too much revere, or love the honour, and the virtue of that worthy man.’

‘You see, Frank, how greatly you have been to blame,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, and

‘and how much more so you might have been, if I had not dissuaded you from following that gentleman, who, I now perceive, was the savour, not the invader of our sister’s innocence.’ — ‘I blush,’ replied Mr. Francis, ‘at the remembrance of my rashness, — I ought, indeed, to have known Truworth better.’

There passed no more between them on this subject, but on finding Miss Betsey grew more composed, and able to continue a conversation, they obliged her to repeat the particulars of what had happened to her, which she accordingly did, with the greatest veracity imaginable, omitting nothing of moment in the shocking narrative.

The calling to mind a circumstance so detestable to her natural delicacy, threw her, however, into such agonies, which made them think it their province, rather to console her under the affliction she had sustained, than to chide her for the inadvertency that had brought it on her.

They stayed supper with her, which, to save her the trouble of ordering, Mr. Thoughtless went to an adjacent tavern, and gave directions for it himself, — made her drink several glasses of wine, and both of them did every thing in their power to cheer and restore her spirits to their former tone, after which they retired and left her to enjoy what repose the present anxieties of her mind would permit her to take.

Though the condition Miss Betsey was in, made these gentlemen treat her with the abovementioned tenderness, yet both of them were highly incensed against her, for so unadvisedly encouraging the pretensions of a man, whose character she knew nothing of, but from the mouth of a little mantua-maker; — her consenting to sup with him at the house of that woman, and afterwards running with her into his very bed-chamber, were

were actions, which to them seemed to have no excuse.

Mr. Francis, as of the two having the most tender affection for her, had the most deep concern in whatever related to her : — If she were either ‘ a fool,’ said he, stamping with extremity of vexation, ‘ or of a vicious inclination, her conduct would leave no room for wonder ; — but ‘ for a girl, who wants neither wit nor virtue, to ‘ expose herself in this manner, has something in ‘ it inconsistent ! — unnatural ! — monstrous !’

‘ I doubt not,’ cried he again, ‘ if the truth ‘ could be known, that it was some such ridiculous adventure as this, that lost her the affection ‘ of Mr. Trueworth, though her pride and his honour joined to conceal it.’

The elder Mr. Thoughtless was entirely of his brother’s opinion in all these points, and both of them now were more confirmed than ever, that marriage was the only sure guard for the reputation of a young woman of their sister’s temper. — Mr. Munden had been there the day before, and, as he had told Miss Betsy he would do, declared himself to them ; so it was resolved between them, that if on proper enquiry, his circumstances should be found such as he said they were, to clap up the wedding with all imaginable expedition.

But no business, how important or perplexing soever it may be, can render gratitude and good-manners forgotten, or neglected by persons of understanding and politeness ; these gentlemen thought a visit to Mr. Trueworth neither could nor ought to be dispensed with, in order to make him those acknowledgements the service he had done their sister demanded from them.

Accordingly, the next morning Mr. Thoughtless, accompanied by his brother, went in his own coach,

coach, which he made be got ready, as well in respect to himself, as to the person he was going to visit.

They found Mr. Truworth at home, who, doubtless, was not without some expectation of their coming; — on their sending up their names, he received them at the top of the stair-case with so graceful an affability, and sweetness in his air, as convinced the elder Mr. Thoughtless, that the high character his brother Frank had given of that gentleman, was far from exceeding the bounds of truth.

It is certain, indeed, that Mr. Truworth, since the eclairsissement of the Denham affair, had felt the severest remorse within himself, for having given credit to that wicked aspersions cast upon Miss Bersy, and the reflection, that fortune had now put it in his power to atone for the wrong he had been guilty of to that lady, by the late service he had done her, gave a secret satisfaction to his mind, that diffused itself through all his air, and gave a double sprightliness to those eyes, which, by the report of all whoever saw him, stood in need of no addition to their lustre.

The elder Mr. Thoughtless having made his compliments on the occasion, which had brought him thither, the younger advanced, though with a look somewhat more downcast than ordinary: — ‘I know not, sir,’ said he, ‘whether any testimonies of the gratitude I owe you will be acceptable, after the folly into which a mistaken rage transported me last night.’ — ‘Dear Frank,’ cried Mr. Truworth, smiling, and giving him his hand, in token of a perfect reconciliation, ‘none of these formal speeches, — we know each other, — you are by nature warm, and the little philosophy I am master of, makes me think whatever is born with us pleads its own excuse; — besides,

‘besides, to see me with your sister in the condition she then was, entirely justifies your mistake.’
 — ‘Dear Truworth,’ replied the other, embracing him, ‘you are born every way to overcome.’

Mr. Thoughtless returning to some expressions of his sense of the obligation, he had conferred upon their whole family : — ‘Sir, I have done ‘no more,’ said Mr. Truworth, ‘than what every man of honour would think himself bound to do for any woman in the like distress, much more for a lady so deserving as Miss Betsy Thoughtless. — I happened almost miraculously to be in the same house with her, when she stood in need of assistance, and I shall always place the day in which my good stars conducted me to the rescue of her innocence among the most fortunate ones of my whole life.’

In the course of their conversation, the brothers satisfied Mr. Truworth’s curiosity, by acquainting him with the means by which their sister had been seduced into the danger he had so happily delivered her from, and Mr. Truworth in his turn, informed them of the accident that had so seasonably brought him to her relief; which latter, as the reader is yet ignorant of, is proper should be related.

‘Having sent,’ said he, ‘for my steward to come to town, on account of some leases I am to sign, the poor man had the misfortune to break his leg as he was stepping out of the stage coach, and was carried directly to Mrs. Modely’s, where it seems, he has formerly lodged; — this casualty obliged me to go to him; — as a maid-servant was shewing me to his room, which is up two pair of stairs, I heard the rustling of silks behind me, and casting my eyes over the bannister, I saw Miss Betsy, and a woman with her,

‘ who I since found was Mrs. Modely, pass hastily into a room on the first floor.’

‘ A curiosity,’ continued he, ‘ which I cannot very well account for, induced me to ask the nurse, who attends my steward, what lodgers there were below?’ — To which she replied, that they said he was a baronet, but that she believed nothing of it, for the two fellows that passed for his servants were always with him, and she believed eat at the same table, for they never dined in the kitchen: — ‘ besides,’ said she, ‘ I have seen two or three shabby, ill-looking men, that have more the appearance of pick-pockets, than companions for a gentleman, come after him, and, indeed, I believe he is no better than a rogue himself.’

‘ Though I was extremely sorry,’ pursued Mr. Trueworth, ‘ to find Miss Betsey should be the guest of such a person, yet I could not forbear laughing at the description this woman gave of him; which, however, proved to be a very just one. — I had not been there above half an hour, before I heard the shrieks of a woman, and fancied, the voice of Miss Betsey, though I had never heard it made use of in that manner; — I went however to the top of the stair-case, where hearing the cries redoubled, I drew my sword, and ran down; the door of the chamber was locked, but setting my foot against it, I easily burst it open, and believe entered but just in time to save the lady from violation.’

‘ On seeing the face,’ added he, ‘ of this pretended baronet, I immediately knew him to be a fellow that waited on a gentleman I was intimate with at Paris. — What his real name is I either never heard or have forgot; for his master never called him by any other, than that of Quaint, on account of the romantic and affected fashion

‘fashion in which he always spoke : — the rascal has a little smattering of Latin, and I believe has dipped into a good many of the ancient authors ; — he seemed indeed to have more of the fop than the knave in him, but he soon discovered himself to be no less the one than the other, for he ran away from his master, and robbed him of things to a considerable value : — he was pursued and taken, but the gentleman permitted him to make his escape, without delivering him into the hands of justice.’

After this mutual recapitulation, the two brothers began to consider what was to be done for the chastisement of the villain, as the prosecuting him by law would expose their sister’s folly, and prove the most mortal stab that could be given to her reputation : — the one was for cutting off his ears, — the other for pinning him against the wall of the very chamber where he had offered the insult ; to which Mr. Trueworth replied, ‘ I must confess his crime deserves much more than your keenest resentments can inflict, but these are punishments which are only the prerogative of law, to which as you rightly judge, it would be improper to have recourse : — I am afraid therefore you must content yourselves with barely caning him ; — that is,’ continued he, ‘ if he is yet in the way for it, but I shrewdly suspect he has before now made off, as well as his confederates, the parson and the surgeon ; — however I think it would be right to go to the house of this Modely, and see what is to be done.’

To this they both readily agreed, and they all went together ; but as they were going, — ‘ O ! what eternal plagues,’ said Mr. Francis, ‘ has the vanity of this girl brought upon all her friends ?’ — ‘ You will still be making too hasty reflections,’ cried Mr. Trueworth ; — ‘ I hope to see

‘ Miss Betfy one day as much out-shine the greatest part of her sex in prudence, as she has always done in beauty.’

By this time they were at Mrs. Modely’s door; but the maid, whom she had tutored for the purpose, told them, that sir Frederick Fineer was gone; — that he would not pay her mistress for the lodgings, because she had suffered him to be interrupted in them; — and that she was sick in bed with the fright of what had happened, and could not be spoke to.

On this Mr. Trueworth ran up to his steward’s chamber, not doubting but he should there be certainly informed whether the mock baronet was gone or not; — the two Mr. Thoughtlesses waited in the parlour till his return, which was immediately, with intelligence, that the wretch had left the house soon after himself had conducted Miss Betfy thence.

They had now no longer any business here; but the elder Mr. Thoughtless could not take leave of Mr. Trueworth without entreating the favour of seeing him at his house: to which he replied, that he believed he should not stay long in town, and while he did so, had business that very much engrossed his time, but at his return should rejoice in an opportunity of cultivating a friendship with him. — With this, and some other compliments they separated; — the two brothers went home, and Mr. Trueworth went where his inclinations led him.

C H A P. XVII.

Love in death, — an example rather to be wondered at than imitated.

ON Mr. Trueworth’s going to sir Basil’s, he found the two ladies with all the appearance of

of the most poignant grief in their faces : — Mrs. Wellair's eyes were full of tears, but those of her lovely sister seemed to flow from an exhaustless spring.

This was a strange phenomenon to Mr. Trueworth ; — it struck a sudden damp upon the gaiety of his spirits, and he had but just recovered his surprize enough to ask the meaning, when Mrs. Wellair prevented him, by saying, ' O ! Mr. Trueworth, we have a melancholy account to give you ; — poor Mrs. Blanchfield is no more.'

' Dead !' — cried he. — ' Dead,' repeated Miss Harriot ; — ' but the manner of it will affect you most.' — ' A much less motive,' replied he, ' if capable of giving pain to you, must certainly affect me ; — but I beseech you, madam,' continued he, ' keep me not in suspense.'

' You may remember,' said Miss Harriot, sighing, ' that some time ago we told you, that Mrs. Blanchfield had taken leave of us, and was gone down to Windsor ; — it seems she had not been long there before she was seized with a disorder, which the physicians term a fever on the spirits : — whatever it was, she lingered in it for about three weeks, and died yesterday ; — some days before she sent for a lawyer, and disposed of her effects by will : — she also wrote a letter to me, which last she put into the hands of a maid, who has lived with her almost from her infancy, binding her by the most solemn vow to deliver it to me, as soon as possible after she was dead, and not 'till then, on any motive whatsoever.'

' The good creature,' pursued Miss Harriot, ' hurried up to town this morning, to perform her lady's last injunctions. — this is the letter I received from her,' continued she, taking it out of her pocket, and presenting it to him, — ' read it, and join with us in lamenting the fatal effects

of a passion people take so much pains to inspire.

The impatience Mr. Truworth was in, for the full explanation of a mystery, which, perhaps, he had some guess into the truth of, hindered him from making any answer to what Miss Harriot had said upon the occasion; — he hastily opened the letter, and found in it these lines:

TO MISS HARRIOT LOVEIT.

Dear happy friend,

AS my faithful Lucy at the same time she delivers this into your hands, brings you also the intelligence of my death, the secret it discovers cannot raise in you any jealous apprehensions: — I have been your rival, my dear Harriot, but when I found you were mine, wished you not to lose what I would have given the world, had I been mistress of it, to have gained; — the first moment I saw the too agreeable Mr. Truworth, something within told me, he was my fate; — that according as I appeared in his eyes I must either be happy or no more; — it has proved the latter, — death has seized upon my heart, but cannot drive my passion thence: — whether I shall carry it beyond the grave I shall know before this reaches you, but at present I think it is so incorporated with my immortal part, as not to be separated by the dissolution of my frame.

I will not pretend to have had so much command over myself, as to refrain taking any step for the forwarding my desires; — before I was convinced of his attachment to you, I caused a letter to be wrote to him, making him an offer of the heart and fortune of a person, unnamed indeed, but mentioned as one not altogether unworthy of his acceptance: — this he answered

'swered as requested, and ingenuously confessed,
 ' that the whole affections of his soul were al-
 ' ready devoted to another, — I had then no
 ' more to do with hope, nor had any thing to at-
 ' tempt but the concealing my despair; — this
 ' made me quit London, and all that was valuable
 ' to me in it. — I flattered myself, alas! that
 ' time and absence would restore my reason; —
 ' but, as I said before, my doom was fixed, —
 ' irrevocably fixed! and I soon found, by a thou-
 ' sand symptoms of an inward decay, that to be
 ' sensible of that angelic man's perfections, and to
 ' live without him, are things incompatible in na-
 ' ture; — even now, while I am writing, I feel
 ' the icy harbingers of death creep through my
 ' veins, benumbing as they pass; — soon, —
 ' very soon shall I be reduced to a cold lump of
 ' senseless clay — indeed I have now no wish for
 ' life, nor business to transact below. — I have
 ' settled my worldly affairs, and disposed of the
 ' effects that heaven has blessed me with, to those
 ' I think most worthy of them. — My last will
 ' is in the hands of Mr. Markland the lawyer, —
 ' I hope he is an honest man; but least he should
 ' prove otherwise, let Mr. Truworth know, I
 ' have made him master of half that fortune,
 ' which once I should have rejoiced to have laid
 ' wholly at his feet; — all my jewels I entreat
 ' you to accept, — they can add nothing to your
 ' beauty, but may serve to ornament your wed-
 ' ding garments; — Lucy has them in her posses-
 ' sion, and will deliver them to you.

' And now, my dear Miss Harriot, I have one
 ' favour to beg of you, and that is, that you exert
 ' all the influence your merits claim over the
 ' heart of Mr. Truworth, to engage him to ac-
 ' company you in seeing me laid in earth. — I
 ' know your gentle generous nature too well to
 ' doubt

‘doubt you will deny me this request, and the
 ‘very idea, that you will ask, and he will grant;
 ‘gives, methinks, a new vigour to my enfeebled
 ‘spirits. — O! if departed souls are permitted;
 ‘as some say they are, to look down on what
 ‘passes beneath the moon, how will mine triumph,
 ‘— how exult, to see my poor remains thus ho-
 ‘noured! — thus attended! — I can no more
 ‘but this, — may you make happy the best of
 ‘men, and may he make you the happiest of
 ‘women. — Farewell, — eternally farewell, —
 ‘be assured, that as I lived, so I die,

‘With the greatest sincerity,

‘Dear Miss Harriot,

‘Your’s, &c.

‘J. BLANCHFIELD.

‘P. S. Be so good to give my last adieus to my
 ‘dear Mrs. Wellair; — she will find I have
 ‘not forgot her, nor my little godson, in my
 ‘bequests.’

How would the vain, unthinking fop, have
 exulted on such a proof of his imagined merit?
 — how would the fordid avaricious man, in the
 pleasure of finding so unexpected an accession to
 his wealth, have forgot all compassion for the
 hand that gave it! — Mr. Trueworth, on the
 contrary, blushed at having so much more ascribed
 to him, than he would allow himself to think he
 deserved, and would gladly have been deprived
 of the best part of his fortune, rather than have
 received an addition to it by such fatal means.’

The accident, however, was so astonishing to
 him, that he scarce believed it real, nor could
 what he read in the letter, under her own hand,
 nor all Mrs. Wellair, and Miss Harriot alledged;
 persuade him to think, at least to acknowledge,
 that the lady’s death was owing to a hopeless flame
 for him.

While

While they were speaking, sir Basil came in; — he had been at home when his sister received the letter, and had heard what Lucy said of her mistress's indisposition, and was therefore no stranger to any part of the affair.

‘Well, Truworth,’ said he to that gentleman, ‘I have often endeavoured to emulate, and have even envied the great talents you are master of, but am now reconciled to nature for not bestowing them on me, lest they might prove of the same ill consequence to some woman as your’s has been to Mrs. Blanchfield.’

‘Dear sir Basil,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘do not attempt to force me into an imagination, which would render me at once both vain and wretched. — Chance might direct the partial inclination of this lady to have kinder thoughts of me than I could either merit or return, but I should be loth to believe, that they have produced the sad event we now lament.’

‘I am of opinion, indeed,’ said sir Basil, ‘that there are many who deceive themselves, as well as the world, in this point. — People are apt to mistake that for love, which is only the effect of pride for a disappointment; but it would be unjust to suppose this was the case with Mrs. Blanchfield: — the generous legacy she has bequeathed to you, and the tenderness with which she treats my sister, leaves no room to suspect her soul was tainted with any of those turbulent emotions, which disgrace the name of love, and yet are looked upon as the consequences of that passion; — she knew no jealousy, — harboured no revenge, — the affection she had for you was simple and sincere, and meeting no return preyed only upon herself, and by degrees consumed the springs of life.’

‘I am glad, however,’ said the elder sister of fir Bazil, ‘to find that Mr. Truworth has nothing to reproach himself with, on this unhappy score; — some men, on receiving a letter of the nature he did, would through meer curiosity of knowing on whose account it came, have sent an answer of encouragement; — it must be owned, therefore, that the command he had over himself in this act of generosity to his unknown admirer, demanded all the recompence in her power to make.’

Mr. Truworth, whose modesty had been sufficiently wounded in this conversation, hastily replied, ‘Madam, what you by an excess of goodness are pleased to call generosity, was, in effect, no more than a piece of common honesty: — the man capable of deceiving a woman, who regards him, is no less a villain, than he who defrauds his neighbour of the cash intrusted in his hands: — the unfortunate Mrs. Blanchfield did me the honour to depend on my sincerity and secrecy; — I did but my duty in observing both, — and she in so highly over-rating that act of duty, shewed indeed the magnanimity of her own mind, but adds no merit to mine.’

‘I could almost wish it did not,’ said Miss Harriot, sighing. — ‘Madam!’ cried Mr. Truworth, looking earnestly on her, as not able to comprehend what she meant by these words. — ‘Indeed,’ resumed she, ‘I could almost wish, that you were a little less deserving than you are, since the esteem you enforce is of so dangerous a kind.’ — She uttered this with so inexpressible a tenderness in her voice and eyes, that he could not restrain himself from kissing her hand in the most passionate manner, though in the presence of her brother and sister, crying, at the same time, ‘I desire no more of the world’s esteem, than just so

so much as may defend my lovely Harriot from all blame, for receiving my addressees.'

They afterwards fell into some discourse, concerning what was really deserving admiration, and what was so only in appearance, in which many mistakes in judging were detected, and the extreme weakness of giving implicitly into the opinion of others, exposed by examples suitable to the occasion.

But these are inquiries which 'tis possible would not be very agreeable to the present age, and it would be madness to risque the displeasure of the multitude for the sake of gratifying a few; — so the reader must excuse the repetition of what was said by this agreeable company on that subject.

C H A P. XVIII.

Displays Miss Betsy in her penitentials, and the manner in which she behaved after having met with so much matter for the humiliation of her vanity, as also some farther particulars, equally worthy the attention of the curious.

WHILE Miss Betsy had her brothers with her, and was treated by them with a tenderness beyond what she could have expected, just after the unlucky adventure she had fallen into, she felt not that remorse and vexation, which it might be said her present situation demanded.

But when they were gone, and she was left intirely to those reflections, which their presence and good humour had only retarded, how did they come with double force upon her! — To think she had received the addressees, and entertained with a mistaken respect, the lowest, and most abject dregs of mankind; — that she had exposed herself

self to the insults of that ruffian; — that it had not been in her power to defend herself from his taking liberties with her, the most shocking to her delicacy, and that she was on the very point of becoming the victim of his base designs upon her, made her feel over again, in idea, all the horrors of her real danger.

By turns, indeed, she blessed heaven for her escape; — but then the means to which she was indebted for that escape, was a fresh stab to her pride. — ‘I am preserved, ’tis true,’ said she, ‘from ruin and everlasting infamy; — but then by whom am I preserved? — by the man, who once adored, — then slighted, — and must now despise me. — If nothing but a miracle could save me, O! why, good heaven, was not that miracle performed by any instrument but him! — What triumph to him! — What lasting shame to me, has this unfortunate accident produced!’

‘Alas!’ — continued she, weeping, — ‘I wanted not this proof of his honour, — his courage, — his generosity; — nor was there any need of my being reduced in the manner he found me, to make him think me undeserving of his affection.’

Never was a heart torn with a greater variety of anguish, than that of this unfortunate young lady: — as she yet was ignorant of what steps her brothers intended to take in this affair, and feared they might be such as would render what had happened to her public to the world, she fell into reflections that almost turned her brain; — she represented to herself all the sarcasms, — all the comments, that she imagined, and probably would have been made on her behaviour, — her danger, and her delivery; — all these thoughts were insupportable to her, — she resolved to hide herself for ever from the town, and pass her future life in obscurity; — so dreadful to her were the apprehen-

sions

sions of becoming the object of derision, that rather than endure it she would suffer any exile.

In the present despondency of her humour, she would certainly have fled the town, and gone directly down to L—e, if she had not known that sir Ralph and lady Trusty were expected here in a very short time; and she was so young when she left that country, that she could not think of any family to whom it was proper for her to go, without some previous preparations.

All her pride, — her gaiety, — her vanity of attracting admiration; — in fine, all that had composed her former character, seemed now to be lost and swallowed up in the sense of that bitter shame and contempt, in which she imagined herself involved, and she wished for nothing but to be unseen, unregarded, and utterly forgotten, by all that had ever known her, — being almost ready to cry out with Dido,

‘Nor art, nor nature’s hand can ease my grief,
 ‘Nothing but death, the wretch’s last relief;
 ‘Then, farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell
 ‘With youth and life, — and life itself, farewell.’

The despair of that unhappy queen, so elegantly described by the poet, could not far transcend what poor miss Betsy sustained during this whole cruel night; — nor did the day afford her any more tranquility; on the contrary, she hated the light, — the sight even of her own servants was irksome to her; she ordered, that whoever came to visit her, except her brothers, should be denied admittance, — complained of a violent pain in her head, — would not be prevailed upon to take the least refreshment, but kept herself upon the bed, indulging all the horrors of despair and grief.

In the afternoon Mr. Francis Thoughtless came, — seemed a little surprised to find his brother was not there, and told Miss Betsy, that having been

called different ways, they had appointed to meet at her lodgings, in order to have some serious discourse with her, concerning her future settlement; to which she replied, that her late fright hung so heavy on her spirits, that she was in little condition at present to resolve on any thing.

She spoke this with so dejected an air, that Mr. Francis, who truly loved her, in spite of all the resentment he had for the errors of her conduct, could not forbear saying a great many tender things to her; but nothing afforded her so much consolation, as the account he gave her, that no prosecution would be commenced against the sham sir Frederick Fineer: — ‘The villain,’ said he, ‘is run away from his lodging, but questionless might easily be found out, and brought to justice; but the misfortune is, that in cases of this nature, the offended must suffer as well as the offender; — to punish him must expose you, — you see therefore, to what your inadvertency has reduced you, — injured to the most shocking degree, yet denied the satisfaction of revenge.’

Miss Betsy only answering with her tears, — ‘I speak not this to upbraid you,’ resumed he, ‘and would be far from adding to the affliction you are in; — on the contrary, I would have you be chearful, and rejoice more in the escape you have had, than bewail the danger you have past through; — but then, my dear sister, I would wish you also to put yourself into a condition, which may defend you from attempts of this vile nature.’

He was going on with something farther, when the elder Mr. Thoughtless came in: — ‘I have been detained,’ said that gentleman, ‘longer than I expected; — my friend is going to have his picture drawn, and knowing I have been in
‘Italy,

‘Italy, would needs have my judgement upon the painter’s skill.’

‘I suppose then,’ said Mr. Francis, — ‘your eyes have been feasted with the resemblance of a great number of beauties, either real or fictitious.’ — ‘No faith,’ replied the other, ‘I believe none of the latter; — the man seems to be too much an artist in his profession, to stand in any need of having recourse to that stale stratagem of inviting customers, by exhibiting shadows, which have no substances but in his own brain, and I must do him the justice to say, that I never saw life imitated to more perfection.’

‘Then you saw some faces there you were acquainted with,’ said the younger Mr. Thoughtless. — ‘Two or three,’ answered the elder; — ‘but one, which more particularly struck me, as I had seen the original but twice; — but once indeed to take any notice of: — it was of your friend, — the gentleman we waited on this morning.’

‘What! — Trueworth!’ — demanded Mr. Francis. — ‘The same,’ resumed the other: — ‘never was there a more perfect likeness; — he is drawn in miniature; I believe, by the size of the piece, intended to be worn as a lady’s watch; — but I looked on it through my magnifier, and thought I saw his very self before me.’

He said much more in praise of the excellence of this artist, as indeed he was very full of it, having a desire his favourite mistress’s picture should be drawn, and was transported to have found a person, who, he thought, could do it so much justice.

Though Miss Betsy sat all this time in a pensive posture, and seemed not to take any notice of this discourse, yet no part of it was lost upon her. — ‘You extol this painter so much, brother,’

said she, 'that if I thought my picture worth drawing, I would fit to him myself. — Pray,' continued she, 'where does he live, and what is his name?' — Mr. Thoughtless having satisfied her curiosity in these points, no more was said on the occasion, and the brothers immediately entered into a conversation, upon the business which had brought them thither.

The elder of them remonstrated to her, in the strongest terms he was able, the perpetual dangers to which, through the baseness of the world, and her own inadvertency, she was liable every day to be exposed: — 'This last ugly accident,' said he, 'I hope may be hushed up, — Mr. Trueworth, I dare believe, is too generous to make any mention of it, and those concerned in it will be secret for their own sakes; — but you may not always meet the same prosperous chance. — It behoves us therefore, who must share in your disgrace, as well as have a concern for your happiness, to insist on your putting yourself into a different mode of life: — Mr. Munden makes very fair proposals; — he has given me leave to examine the rent-roll of his estate, which accordingly I have ordered a lawyer to do: — he will settle an hundred and fifty pounds per annum on you for pin-money, and jointure you in four hundred, and I think your fortune does not entitle you to a better offer.'

'Brother, I have had better,' replied Miss Betty, with a sigh. — 'But you rejected it,' cried Mr. Francis, with some warmth; — 'and you are not to expect a second Trueworth will fall to your share.' — 'Let us talk no more of what is past,' resumed the elder Mr Thoughtless; — 'but endeavour to persuade our sister to accept of that, which at present is most for her advantage.'

Both

Both these gentlemen, in their different turns, made use of every argument that could be brought on the occasion, to prevail on Miss Betsy to give them some assurance, that as now there was no better prospect for her, she would trifle no longer with the pretensions of Mr. Munden, but resolve to marry him, in case the condition of his affairs was proved, upon enquiry, to be such as he had represented it to them.

She made, for a great while, very little reply to all this ; — her head was now indeed very full of something else ; — she sat in a kind of reverie, and had a perfect absence of mind, during this latter part of their discourse ; — she heard, but heard without attention, and without considering the weight of any thing they urged ; yet, at last, meerly to get rid of their importunities and presence, that she might be alone to indulge her own meditations, she said as they said, and promised to do whatever they required of her.

Mr. Thoughtless having now, as he imagined, brought her to the bent he wished, took his leave ; but Mr. Francis stayed some time longer, nor had, perhaps, gone so soon, if Miss Betsy had not discovered a certain restlessness, which made him think she would be glad to be alone.

This was the first time she had ever desired his absence, but now, indeed, most heartily did so ; — she had got a caprice in her brain, which raised ideas there, she was in pain till she had modelled, and brought to the perfection she wanted. — What her brother had cursorily mentioned, concerning the picture of Mr. Trueworth, had made a much deeper impression on her mind, than all the serious discourse he had afterwards entertained her with ; — she longed to have in her possession so exact a resemblance of a man, who once had loved her, and for whom

she had always the most high esteem, though her pride would never suffer her to shew it to any one, who professed himself her lover. — ‘This picture,’ said she, ‘by looking on it, will remind me of the obligation I owe to him, — I might forget it else, — and I would not be ungrateful; — though it is not in my nature to love, I may, nay I ought, after what he has done for me, to have a friendship for him.’

She then began to consider, whether there was a possibility of becoming the mistress of what she so much desired; — she had never given her mind to plotting, — she had never been at the pains of any contrivances, but how to ornament her dress, or place the patches of her face with the most graceful art, and was extremely at a loss what stratagem to form for the getting this picture into her hands; — at first, she thought of going to the painter, and bribe him to take a copy of it for her use; — ‘but then,’ said she, ‘a copy taken from a copy goes still farther from the original; — besides, he may betray me, or he may not have time to do it, and I would leave nothing to chance. — No, I must have the very picture that my brother saw, that I may be sure is like, for I know he is a judge.’

‘Suppose,’ cried she again, ‘I go under the pretence of sitting for my picture, and look over all his pieces, — I fancy I may find an opportunity of slipping Truworth’s into my pocket, — I could send the value of it the next day, so the man would be no sufferer by it.’

This project seemed feasible to her for a time, but she afterwards rejected it, on account, she could not be sure of committing the theft so artfully, as not to be detected in the fact; — several other little stratagems succeeded this in her inventive brain, all which, on second thoughts,

she

she found either impossible to be executed, or could promise no certainty in their effects.

Sleep was no less a stranger to her eyes this night, than it had been the preceding one; — yet of how different a nature were the agitations which kept her waking: — in the first, the shock of the insult she had sustained, and the shame of her receiving her protection from him, by whom, of all men living, she was least willing to be obliged, took up all her thoughts — in the second, she was equally engrossed by the impatience of having something to preserve him eternally in her mind.

After long revolving within herself, she at last hit upon the means of accomplishing her desires; — the risque she ran, indeed, was somewhat bold, but as it succeeded without suspicion, she had only to guard against accidents, that might occasion a future discovery of what she had done.

Early the next morning she sent to Blunt's, — hired a handsome chaise and pair, with a coachman, and two servants, in a livery very different from that she gave her own man; — then dressed herself in a riding habit, and hunting-cap, which had been made for her, on her going down to Oxford, and she had never been seen in by Mr. Truworth; — so that she thought, she might be pretty confident, that when he should come to examine who had taken away his picture, the description could never enable him to guess at the right person.

With this equipage she went to the house where the painter lived; — on enquiring for him by his name, he came immediately to know her commands. — ‘You have the picture here of Mr. Truworth,’ said she; ‘pray is it ready?’ — ‘Yes, madam,’ answered he, ‘I am just going to carry it home.’ — ‘I am glad then, sir,’ resumed

Miss Betsey, 'that I am come time enough to save you the trouble: — Mr. Trueworth went to Hampstead last night, and being to follow him this morning, he desired I would bring it with me, and pay you the money.' — 'O, madam, as to the money,' said he, 'I shall see Mr. Trueworth again;' — and then called to his man to bring down his picture. — 'Indeed I shall not take it without paying you,' said she; 'but in the hurry I forgot to ask him the sum, — pray how much is it?' — 'My constant price, madam,' replied he, 'is ten guineas, and the gentleman never offered to beat me down.'

By this time the man had brought the picture down in a little box, which the painter opening, as he presented to her, cried, 'Is it not a prodigious likeness, madam?' — 'Yes, really, sir,' said she, 'in my opinion there is no fault to be found.' — She then put the picture into her pocket, — counted ten guineas to him out of her purse, and told him, with a smile, that she believed he would very shortly have more business from the same quarter, — then bid the coachman drive on.

The coachman having previous orders what to do, was no sooner out of sight of the painter's house, than he turned down the first street, and carried Miss Betsey directly home; — she discharged her retinue, undressed herself with all the speed she could, and whoever had now seen her, would never have suspected she had been abroad.

This young lady was not of a temper to grieve long for any thing; — how deep soever she was affected, the impression wore off on the first new turn that offered itself. — All her remorse, — all her vexation, for the base design laid against her at Mrs. Modely's, were dissipated the moment she

she took it into her head to get possession of this picture, and the success of her enterprize elated her beyond expression.

It cannot be supposed, that it was altogether owing to the regard she had for Mr. Trueworth, though in effect much more than she herself was yet sensible of, that she took all this pains; it looks as if there was also some little mixture of female malice in the case. — Her brother had said, that the picture seemed to be intended to be worn at a lady's watch; — she doubted not but it was so, and the thoughts of disappointing her rival's expectations, contributed greatly to the satisfaction she felt at what she had done.

C H A P. XIX.

Presents the reader with some occurrences, which, from the foregoing preparations, might be expected, and also with others that may seem more surprising.

MISS Betsy was not deceived in her conjecture, in relation to the picture's being designed as an offering to some lady: — Mr. Trueworth had not indeed sat for it to please himself, but to oblige Miss Harriot, who had given some hints, that such a present would not be unwelcome to her.

It is a common thing with painters to keep the pieces in their own hands as long as they can, after they are finished, especially if they are of persons endued by nature with any perfections, which may do honour to their art: — this gentleman was like others of his profession, — he found it to his credit to shew Mr. Trueworth's picture to as many as came to look over his paintings,
and

and had detained it for several days beyond the time in which he had promised to send it, on pretence, that there were still some little touches wanting in the drapery.

Mr. Truworth growing a little impatient at the delay, as Miss Harriot had asked two or three times, in a gay manner, when she should see his resemblance, went himself, in order to fetch it away: — the painter was surpris'd at sight of him, and much more so when he demanded the picture; — he told him, however, the whole truth without hesitation, that he delivered it to a lady not above an hour before he came, who paid him the money for it, and said that she had called for it on his request.

Nothing had ever happened that seemed more strange to him; — he made a particular enquiry concerning the face; — age, — complexion, — shape, — stature, and even dress of the lady, who had put this trick upon him; and it was well for Miss Betsy, that she had taken all the precautions she did, or she had infallibly been discovered. — A thing, which, perhaps, would have given her more lasting confusion, than even her late unlucky adventure with the mock baronet.

She was, however, among all the ladies of his acquaintance, almost the only one who never came into his head on this occasion; — sometimes he thought of one, — sometimes he thought of another; but on recollecting all the particulars of their behaviour towards him, could find no reason to ascribe what had been done to any of them: — Miss Flora was the only person he could imagine capable of such a thing; — he found it highly probable, that her love and invention had furnished her with the means of committing this innocent fraud; and though he was heartily vexed, that he must be at the trouble of sitting for another

ther picture, yet he could not be angry with the woman who had occasioned it:—on the contrary, he thought there was something so tender, and so delicate withal, in this proof of her passion, that it very much enhanced the pity and goodwill he before had for her.

But while his generous heart was entertaining these too favourable and kind sentiments of her, she was employing her whole wicked wit, to make him appear the basest of mankind, and also to render him the most unhappy.

She had found out every thing she wanted to know, concerning Mr. Trueworth's courtship to Miss Harriot, and flattered herself, that a lady bred in the country, and unacquainted with the artifices frequently practised in town, to blacken the fairest characters, would easily be frightened into a belief of any thing she attempted to inspire her with.

In the vile hope, therefore, of accomplishing so detestable a project, she contrived a letter in the following terms:

TO MISS HARRIOT LOVEIT.

'MADAM,

'**W**HERE innocence is about to suffer, merely
' through its incapacity of suspecting that ill
' in another it cannot be guilty of itself, common
' honesty forbids a stander-by to be silent:—you
' are on the brink of a precipice, which if you fall
' into, it is not in the power of human art to save
' you.—Death only can remove you from misery,
' —remorse, —distraction, and woes without
' a name.—Trueworth, that sly deceiver of your
' sex, and most abandoned of his own, can only
' bring you a polluted heart and prostituted vows;
' —he made the most honourable professions of
' love to a young lady of family and character,
' —gained

' — gained her affections, I hope no more ; —
 ' but whatever was between them, he basely
 ' quitted her, to mourn her ill-placed love and
 ' ruined fame : — yet this, madam, is but his least
 ' of crimes ; — he has since practised his betray-
 ' ing arts on another, superior to the former in
 ' every female virtue and accomplishment, — se-
 ' cond to none in beauty, and of a reputation spot-
 ' less as the sun, till an unhappy passion for that
 ' worst of men obscured its brightness, at least in
 ' the eyes of the censorious ; — he is, however,
 ' bound to her by the most solemn engagements
 ' that words can form, under his own hand-write-
 ' ing ; which, if she does not in due time produce
 ' against him, it will be owing only to her too
 ' great modesty. — These two, madam, are the
 ' most conspicuous victims of his perfidy, — pray
 ' heaven you may not close the sad triumvirate,
 ' and that I may never see such beauty, and such
 ' goodness, stand among the foremost in the rank
 ' of those many wretches he has made.

' In fine, madam, he has deceived your friends,
 ' and betrayed you into a mistaken opinion of his
 ' honour and sincerity : — if he marries you, you
 ' cannot but be miserable, he being the right of
 ' another ; — if he does not marry you, your re-
 ' putation suffers — Happy is it for you if the loss
 ' of reputation is all you will have to regret ; —
 ' he already boasts of having received favours from
 ' you, which, whoever looks in your face, will
 ' find it very difficult to think you capable of
 ' granting ; — but yet, who knows what strange
 ' effects too great a share of tenderness in the
 ' composition may not have produce ?

' Fly then, madam, from this destructive town,
 ' and the worst monster in it, Truworth : —
 ' Retire in time to those peaceful shades from
 ' whence you came, — and save what yet re-
 ' mains

‘ mains of you worthy your attention to pre-
‘ serve.

‘ Whatever reports to your prejudice, the vani-
‘ ty of your injurious deceiver may have made him
‘ give out, among his loose companions, I still
‘ hope your virtue has hitherto protected you,
‘ and that this warning will not come too late to
‘ keep you from ever verifying them.’

‘ Be assured, madam, that in giving this ac-
‘ count, I am instigated by no other motive than
‘ merely my love of virtue, and detestation of all
‘ who would endeavour to corrupt it, and that I
‘ am,

‘ With a perfect sincerity,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your well wisher,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ UNKNOWN.’

Miss Flora, on considering what she had wrote,
began to think she had expressed herself in some-
what too warm a manner ; — but she let it pass
on this account : — ‘ By the virulence,’ said she,
‘ with which I have spoke of Trueworth, his
‘ adored Miss Harriot will certainly imagine it
‘ comes from one of those unhappy creatures I
‘ have represented in it ; — and, if so, it will
‘ gain the more credit with her ; — if she sup-
‘ poses that rage and despair has dictated some
‘ groundless accusations against her lover, she
‘ nevertheless will believe others to be fact, and
‘ that at least he has been false to one.’

She therefore went to the person, who was al-
ways her secretary in affairs of this nature, and
having got it copied, was going to the post-house,
in order to send it away ; for she never trusted
any person but herself with these dispatches.

She was within three or four yards of the post-
house, when she saw Mr. Trueworth at some dis-

tance, on the other side of the street; — her heart fluttered at this unexpected sight of him; — she had no power to refrain speaking to him; — she stayed not to put her letter in, but flew directly cross the way, and met him just as he was turning the corner of another street.

‘Oh, Mr. Trueworth,’ cried she, as they drew near each other, ‘I have prayed that I might live, once more to see you, and heaven has granted my petition.’

‘I hope, madam,’ said he, ‘that heaven will always be equally propitious to your desires in things of greater moment.’ — ‘There can scarce be any of greater moment,’ answered she; ‘for at present I have a request to make you of the utmost importance to me, though no more than I am certain you would readily grant to any one you had the least acquaintance with; — but,’ continued she, ‘this is no proper place for us to discourse in, — upon the terms we now are, it can be no breach of faith to the mistress of your vows, to step with me for three minutes where we may not be exposed to the view of every passenger.’

Mr. Trueworth had not been very well pleased with the rencounter, and would gladly have dispensed with complying with her invitation, but thought after what she had said, he could not refuse, without being guilty of a rudeness unbecoming of himself, as well as cruel to her; yet did he comply in such a manner as might make her see, his inclination had little part in his consent; — he told her, he was in very great haste, but would snatch as much time as she mentioned from the business he was upon. — Nothing more was said, and they went together into the nearest tavern, where being seated, and wine brought in,
— ‘Now,

— 'Now, madam,' said he, with a cold civility, 'please to favour me with your commands.'

'Alas!' replied she, 'it belongs not to me to command, and my request you have already granted.' — 'What without knowing it,' cried he? — 'Yes,' resumed she, 'I thought an intimacy such as ours has been, ought not to have been broke off without a kind farewell. — I blame you not for marrying; — yet sure I deserve not to be quite forsaken, — utterly thrown off! — you might at least have flattered me with the hope, that, in spite of your matrimonial engagement, you would still retain some sparks of affection for your poor Flora.' — 'Be assured,' said he, 'I shall always think on you with tenderness.' — 'And can you then resolve never to see me more,' rejoined she passionately? — 'I hoped,' replied he, 'that you had acquiesced in the reasons I gave for that resolution.' — 'I hoped so too,' said she, 'and made use of my utmost efforts for that purpose; — but 'tis in vain, — I found I could not live without you, and only wished an opportunity to take one last embrace before I leave the world and you for ever.' — In speaking these words she threw herself upon his neck, and burst into a flood of tears.

How impossible was it for a heart, such as Mr. Trueworth's, to be unmoved at a spectacle like this; — her love, — her grief, and her despair shot through his very soul; — scarce could he refrain mingling his tears with her's: — *My dear Flora,* cried he, *compose yourself,* — *by heaven I cannot bear to see you thus.* — He kissed her cheek while he was speaking, — seated her in a chair, and held her hand in his, with the extremest tenderness.

This wicked creature was not so overcome with the emotions of her love and grief, as not to see

the pity she had raised in him, and flattering herself, that there was in it some mixture of a passion, she more wished to inspire, fell a second time upon his bosom, crying, — ‘ Oh, Trueworth! — Trueworth! — here let me die, for death has nothing in it so terrible as the being separated from you.’

— Mr. Trueworth was a man of strict honour, — great resolution, and passionately devoted to the most deserving of her sex; — yet he was still a man, — was of an amorous complexion, and thus tempted, who can answer, but in this unguarded moment he might have been guilty of a wrong to his dear Harriot, for which he would afterwards have hated himself, if an accident of more service to him, than his own virtue, in so critical a juncture, had not prevented him?

He returned the embrace she gave, and joined his lips to hers, with a warmth which she had not for a long time experienced from him, a sudden rush of transport came at once upon her, with such force, that it overwhelmed her spirits, and she fell into a kind of fainting between his arms; — he was frightened at the change he observed in her, and hastily cutting the lacings of her stays to give her air, the letter above-mentioned dropped from her breast upon the ground: — he took it up, and was going to throw it upon the table, but in that action seeing the name of Miss Harriot on the superscription, was struck with an astonishment not easy to be conceived; — he no longer thought of the condition Miss Flora was in, but tearing open the letter began to examine the contents.

Miss Flora in that instant recovering her senses, and the remembrance of what had been concealed in her bosom, flew to him, endeavouring to snatch the paper from his hands, but he had already seen

too much not to be determined to see the rest. — ‘Stand off!’ cried he, in a voice half choaked with fury, — ‘I am not yet fully acquainted with the whole of the favours you have bestowed upon me in this paper.’ — Confounded as she was, cunning did not quite forsake her, — ‘I am ignorant of what it contains,’ said she; — ‘I found it in the street. — It is not mine, — I wrote it not.’

With such like vain pretences would she have pleaded innocence, yet all the time endeavoured, with her whole strength, to force the proof of her guilt from him, insomuch that though he was very tall, he was obliged with one hand to keep her off, and with the other hold the paper at arms length, while he was reading it, yet could not forbear frequently interrupting himself, to cast a look full of contempt and rage, on the malicious authorefs, — ‘Vile hypocrite!’ cried he; — and then again, as he got farther into the base invective, — ‘Thou fiend in female form!’

She now finding all was over, and seized with a sudden fit of frenzy, or something like it, ran to his sword, which he had pulled off, and laid in the window, and was about to plunge it in her breast; — he easily wrested it from her, and putting it by his side, ‘O thou serpent! — thou viper!’ cried he, — ‘if thou wert a man, thou shouldst not need to be thy own executioner.’ — The tide of her passion then turning another way, she threw herself at his feet, — clung round his legs, and in a voice rather screaming than speaking uttered these words: ‘O, pardon me! — pity me! — whatever I have done my love of you occasioned it.’ — ‘Curse on such poisonous love,’ rejoined he: — ‘hell, and its worst effects, are in the name, when mentioned by a mouth like thine.’ — Then finding it a little dif-

ficult to disentangle himself from the hold she had taken of him, — ‘Thou shame and scandal to that sex, to which alone thou owest thy safety,’ cried he, furiously, ‘quit me this instant, lest I forget thou art a woman, — lest I spurn thee from me, and use thee as the worst of reptiles.’

On hearing these dreadful words, all her strength forsook her, — the sinews of her hands relaxed, and lost their grasp, — she fell a second time into a fainting fit, but of a nature as different from what the former had been, as were the emotions that occasioned it : — Mr. Truworth was now too much and too justly irritated to be capable of relenting ; — he left her in this condition, and only bid the people at the bar, as he went out of the house, send somebody up to her assistance.

The humour he was at present in, rendering him altogether unfit for company, he went directly to his lodgings, where examining the letter with more attention than he could do before, he presently imagined, he was not altogether unacquainted with the hand writing ; — he very well knew it was not that of Miss Flora, yet positive that he had somewhere seen it before ; that which he had received, concerning Miss Betsy, and the child at Denham, came fresh into his head ; — he found them, indeed, the same on comparing, and, as the reader may suppose, this discovery added not a little to the resentment he was before enflamed with, against the base inventress of these double falshoods.

C H A P. XX.

Contains divers things.

MISS Betsy was all this time enjoying the little fraud she had been guilty of: — the idea how Mr. Truworth would be surprized at finding his picture had been taken away, and the various conjectures that would naturally rise in his mind, upon so odd an accident, gave her more real pleasure than others feel on the accomplishment of the most material event.

She was, indeed, of a humour the most perfectly happy for herself that could be; — chearful, — gay, — not apt to create imaginary ills, as too many do, and become wretched for misfortunes which have no existence, but in their own fretful dispositions. — On any real cause, either for grief or anger, that happened to her, no body, it is certain, felt them with a more poignant sensibility; but then she was affected with them but a short time. — The turbulent passions could obtain no residence in her mind, and on the first approaches of their opposite emotions entirely vanished, as if they had never been. — The arrows of affliction, of what kind soever they were, but slightly glanced upon her heart, nor pierced it, much less were able to make any lasting impression there.

She now visited as usual, — saw as much company as ever, and hearing no mention made, wherever she went, of her adventure with the mock baronet, concluded, the whole thing was, and would remain, an eternal secret, and therefore easily forgot it; or, if it came into her head, remembered it only on account of her deliverer.

She was now on exceeding good terms with her brothers, who were full of spirits themselves: — the

— the elder Mr. Thoughtless, who loved play but too well, had lately had some lucky casts, and Mr. Francis had accomplished his affairs, — his commission was signed, and every thing contributed to render the whole family perfectly easy in themselves, and obliging to each other.

In the midst of this contentment of mind Mr. Edward Goodman came to town from Deal : — the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, on account of the many obligations they had to his uncle, and the good character they had heard of himself, received him with abundance of respect and affection.

This young Indian had a great deal of the honest simplicity of his uncle, both in his countenance and behaviour, and wanted not politeness and good manners sufficient to render his conversation very agreeable.

He was sent from Bengal at about four years of age, and received the first rudiments of his education at one of the best schools in England, where he continued till he had attained to his nineteenth, and then returned to his native country, and was now about twenty-four.

Mr. Thoughtless had now got so much the better of his mistress, as to prevail on her, to content herself with keeping in her own apartment, whenever he had any company, by whom it was improper for her to be seen.

He made a handsome entertainment for Mr. Goodman, soon after his arrival, to which the lawyer, who had the care of his affairs, with his wife, a well bred, discreet woman, was also invited ; — Miss Betsey, at the request of her brother, presided at the head of the table.

Dinner was ordered to be ready about three, and the invitation accordingly made ; but the lawyer not coming, his wife, perceiving they
waited

waited for him, was a little perplexed; but she was soon eased of it, by his coming in less than a quarter of an hour, after the time he was expected.

This gentleman was the very person who made Mrs. Blanchfield's will, and to apologize for his stay, he related to them the cause that had detained him, which was, that a demur being made to the payment of some part of the money bequeathed by that lady to Mr. Truworth, he had been obliged to go with him, in order to rectify the mistake which had occasioned it. — In giving this account he imagined not, that any person present had the least concern in it, or even were acquainted with either of the parties he mentioned.

Miss Betsy said nothing, but had her own reflections on what he had been saying; — she, however, had the satisfaction of hearing her two brothers ask those questions she longed to put to him herself. — By the answers he made, she doubted not, but the deceased had been courted by Mr. Truworth, — had loved him, and was to have been married to him, by her having made him so considerable a legacy.

The rest of their conversation that whole day, was chiefly on matters concerning the late Mr. Goodman, — the baseness of lady Mellasin, and the measures that were taking to detect the fraud she had been guilty of; — all which was very dry and insipid to Miss Betsy at this time, as indeed it would have been, had it turned on any other subject. — She was not, therefore, very sorry when the company broke up, that she might be at home, and at full liberty to indulge meditations, which promised her more satisfaction than any thing she could hear abroad.

She had set it down in her mind, from what the lawyer had said, as a sure fact, that Mr. Trueworth, since his desisting his courtship to her, had loved another, and also, that her rival in his affection was now no more. — ‘He need not,’ said she to herself, ‘be at the trouble of sitting the second time for his picture, in compliment to her; nor can what I have done be a subject of disquiet to either of them.’

She then would take his picture out of the cabinet where she had concealed it, and examine it attentively: — ‘Good God!’ cried she, ‘how uncertain is the heart of man? — How little dependence ought we to place on all the professions of love they make us? — Just so he looked, — with all this tenderness in his eyes, when his false tongue protested, he never could think of marrying any woman but myself.’ — But these uneasy, and indeed unjust reflections, lasted not above a minute: — ‘Mrs. Blanchfield,’ said she, ‘had a large fortune; — it was that perhaps he was in love with, and finding no hope of gaining me, he might be tempted by his ambition to make his addressee to her: — but whatever were his thoughts on her account, she is now dead; — and who knows what may happen? that he once loved me is certain; — if he should return to his first vows, the obligation I have received from him would not permit me to treat him with the same indifference I have done. — I am not in love with any man, continued she; but, if I ever marry, he certainly, exclusive of what he has done for me, deserves in every respect the preference, and I should with less regret submit to the yoke of wedlock with him, than any other I have seen.’

Thus went she on, forming ideal prospects all that night, and part of the ensuing day, when the
elder

elder Mr. Thoughtless came, and gave her the most unwelcome interruption she could receive.

He told her, that he had just received an account to his entire satisfaction in every thing, relating to Mr. Munden, and that no reasonable objection could be made, either as to the family, — the estate, or the character of that gentleman; — ‘Therefore,’ said he, ‘as you have thought fit to encourage his pretensions, and he has continued them a sufficient length of time, to defend you from the censure of a too quick consent, you cannot, I think, in honour, but reward his passion without delay.’

Miss Betsy was, at present, in a disposition very unfit to comply with her brother’s advice; but after all that had been urged by him, and by Mr. Francis, she could not assume courage wholly to refuse.

She hesitated, — she began a sentence without ending it, — and when she did, her answers were not at all of a piece with that ready wit which she had always testified on other occasions.

Mr. Thoughtless perceiving she was rather studious to evade giving any determinate answer, than willing to give such a one as he desired she should, began to expostulate with her on the capriciousness of her humour and behaviour; — he conjured her to reflect on her late adventure with the impostor, sir Frederick Fineer; and how ill it became her to countenance the addresses of a wretch like him, and at the same time trifle with a man of fortune and reputation.

She suffered him to go on in this manner for a considerable time, without giving him the least interruption, but by degrees recovering her spirits, — ‘I shall take care, sir,’ said she, ‘never to fall into the like adventure again, neither do I intend to trifle with Mr. Munden; but marriage

‘ is a thing of too serious a nature to hurry into,
 ‘ without first having made trial of the constancy
 ‘ of the man who would be a husband, and also
 ‘ of being well assured of one’s own heart.’

Mr. Thoughtless then told her, with some warmth, that he found she was relapsing into a humour, and way of thinking, which could not in the end but bring ruin on herself, and disgrace to all her family; and added, that for his part he should intermeddle no more in her affairs. — The tender soul of miss Betsy was deeply affected at these words; — she loved her brothers, and could not bear their displeasures; — the thought of having any disagreement with them was dreadful to her, yet the putting a constraint on her inclinations to oblige them was no less so: — in this dilemma, whether she complied, or whether she refused, she found herself equally unhappy.

One moment she was opening her mouth to yield a ready assent to all that was requested of her, on the score of Mr. Munden; — the next to confess, that she neither liked, nor loved that gentleman, and knew not whether she should ever be able to resolve on a marriage with him; but her sincerity forbid the one, and her fears of offending gave a check to the other, and both together kept her entirely silent.

‘ You ought, methinks, however,’ resumed Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ to have spared Mr. Munden the trouble of laying open his circumstances, and me that of examining into them.’ — ‘ I should undoubtedly have done so, sir,’ answered she, ‘ if I had been entirely averse to the proposals of Mr. Munden, therefore both you and he are too hasty in judging. — You know, brother, that sir Ralph, and my dear lady Trusty, will be in town in a very few days, and I am willing to have the approbation of as many of my friends as possible,

possible, in a thing of so much consequence to my future peace.'

Mr. Thoughtless was now somewhat better satisfied than he had been, and after recommending to her a constancy of mind and resolution, took his leave of her.

This conversation having a little dissipated those gay imaginations she was before possessed of, she began to consider seriously, what she meant by all this, and what it availed her to give both her lover and brothers so much matter of complaint against her; she reflected, that she had now gone so far with that gentleman, that neither honour towards him, nor regard to her own reputation, would well suffer her to go back; — 'Since it is so then,' said she to herself, 'to what end do I take all this trouble to invent excuses for delaying what must one day necessarily be?'

'Yet, wherefore must it be,' continued she? 'I have made no promise, and if a better offer should happen, I see no reason that obliges me to reject it: — for example, — if Mr. Truworth, or such a one as Mr. Truworth, if his equal is to be found in nature, neither my brothers, nor the world, I fancy, would condemn me for quitting Mr. Munden.'

'Why then,' cried she, 'need I make all this haste to put myself out of the way of fortune? — I am young enough, — have lost no part of what has attracted me so many admirers; and while my heart and hand are free, have, at least, a chance of being more happy, than Mr. Munden can make me.'

In fine, being fully persuaded in her mind, that the lady, who had supplanted her in Mr. Truworth's affection, was dead, she imagined, there was a probability he might renew his ad-

dress'd to herself : — she wished, at least, to make the experiment, and to that end resolv'd, to give no promise to Mr. Munden ; — yet would she not allow herself to think she loved the other, but only that she would give him the preference, as he was a match of more advantage.

Nothing is more certain, nor, I believe, more obvious to the reader, than that this young lady, almost from the time of Mr. Trueworth's quitting her, had entertained a growing inclination for him, which the late service he had rendered her had very much increased ; — but this her pride would not suffer her to own, even to herself, as the comic poet truly says,

‘ For whatsoe’er the fates charge on pride,
 ‘ The angels fall, and twenty faults beside,
 ‘ On earth ’tis sure, ’mong us of mortal calling,
 ‘ Pride saves man oft, and woman too, from falling.’

C H A P. XXI.

Presents the reader with some prognosticks on events in futuro.

THE reader will easily suppose, that in the present disposition of Miss Betsy's heart, Mr. Munden met with but an indifferent reception from her ; — she avoid'd his company as much as possible, and when oblig'd to receive a visit from him, could not bring herself to treat him with any thing more than a cold civility. — He complain'd of her cruelty, — told her he had expected better things from her, after her brothers had approved his flame ; — he press'd her, in the

the most pathetic terms he was master of, to let him know when the happy day would arrive, which should put an end to the long series of his hopes and fears.

It is certain, that if this gentleman had loved with that warmth and sincerity which some men have done, he must have been very unhappy during his courtship to Miss Betsy ; — but he was altogether insensible of the delicacies of the passion he professed, — he felt not the pains he affected to languish under, — he could support the frowns, or even the flights of his mistress, without any other anxiety than what his pride inflicted.

It was, therefore, rather owing to this last propensity in his nature, than any emotions of a real tenderness for Miss Betsy, which had made him persevere in his addresses to her. — All his acquaintance knew he had courted her a long time : — some of them had been witness of her treatment of him, and he was unwilling it should be said of him, that he had made an offer of his heart in vain.

He had, at first, indeed, a liking of her person ; — he had considered her beauty, wit, and the many accomplishments she was possessed of, were such as would render his choice applauded by the world. — The hopes of gaining her in a short time, by the encouragement she had given his addresses, had made him pursue her with vigour ; but the delays, — the scruples, the capriciousness of her humour, — the pretences she of late had made to avoid giving him a definitive answer, had, at length, pallied all the inclination he once had for her, and even desire was deadened in him, on so many disappointments.

It is, therefore, a very ill-judged thing in the ladies, to keep too long in play the man they ever design to marry; and with all due deference to that great wit and poet, sir John Suckling, there are very few examples, which verify his maxim, that

‘ ’Tis expectation makes the blessing dear.’

According to my opinion, which is founded on observation, another author, who wrote much about the same time with sir John, has given us a more true idea of what a tedious courtship may produce, especially on the side of the man: — in a matrimonial dialogue, he makes the husband excuse the coldness complained of by his wife, in these terms;

‘ Unequal lengths, alas! our passions run,

‘ My love was quite worn out, e’er your’s begun.’

This being the case with Mr. Munden, it rendered Miss Betsey little less indifferent to him, in reality, than he had ever been to her: — to which another motive, perhaps, might also be added, viz. that of his indulging himself with amusements with other fair ones, of a more kind complexion; for continency, as will hereafter appear, was not among the number of that gentleman’s virtues.

But enough of Mr. Munden for the present. — It is now highly proper to give the reader some account what Mr. Truworth was doing, while Miss Betsey was entertaining sentiments for him, which he had long since ceased the ambition of inspiring her with.

Difficult was it for him to get over the mingled astonishment and vexation, which the detection of the wickedness of Miss Flora had involved him in. — The remembrance of those guilty moments,

moments, in which he had indulged a tender intercourse with a woman of her abandoned principles, filled him with the most bitter remorse, and rendered him almost hateful to himself.

To recollect, that he had been the instrument of her base designs on Miss Betsy, and how cruelly he had wronged that lady, by a too rash belief, was, of itself, sufficient to inflame his rage; but when he reflected on this last act of baseness, which, if not providentially discovered, might have made his dear Harriot entertain suspicions of him, fatal to her peace, if not totally destructive of their mutual happiness, the shock of such a misfortune, though happily frustrated, was more than he could bear with any tolerable degree of patience.

Rage, disdain, and revenge, for the vile contriver of so black an attempt, were the first emotions that took possession of his mind; but the violence of those passions evaporating by degrees, he began to think more coolly; and to reason with himself, on the source, from which that depravity of morals and manners, women are sometimes guilty of, proceeded.

‘Chastity,’ said he, ‘is but one branch of virtue, but a material one, and serves as a guard to all the others, and, if that is once overcome, endangers the giving entrance to a thousand vices. — A woman, entirely free from those inordinate desires, which are indeed but the disgrace of love, can scarce be capable of envy, malice, or revenge to any excess.’

‘That sex,’ cried he again, ‘are endued by nature with many perfections, which our’s cannot boast of, — it is their own faults when they sink beneath us in value; — but the best things, when once corrupted, become the worst. —

‘How dear, therefore, ought a woman to prize her innocence?’ — as Shakespear says,

‘—— They all are white, — a sheet

‘Of spotless paper, when they first are born ;

‘But they are to be scrawl’d upon, and blotted

‘By every goose-quill. ——

He was in the midst of these contemplations, when a letter from Miss Flora was brought to him ; — she still flattered herself with being able to work on his good-nature by submissions, and a seeming contrition for what she had done, and had accordingly wrote in the most moving terms she was mistress of ; — but he knowing, by the hand-writing on the superscription, from whom it came, would not even open it, and his indignation re-kindling afresh, he took a piece of paper, in which he wrote only this line,

‘I read no letters from incendiaries.’

This served as a cover to the letter, which he sent back directly by the messenger that brought it.

If the mind of Mr. Truworth had been less taken up than it was at present, this ugly accident would, doubtless, have dwelt much longer upon it ; — but affairs of a more important, and more pleasing nature, demanded his whole attention.

The day prefixed for the celebration of his marriage with Miss Harriot, and also of that of sir Basil and Miss Mabel, had been delayed on account of Mrs. Blanchfield’s death. —— None of these generous persons could think of indulging the joys they so much languished for, ’till all due rites were paid to the memory of that amiable lady.

Mr. Truworth and Miss Harriot went into deep mourning ; — sir Basil and Mrs. Wellair
also.

also put on black ; — Miss Mabel did the same in compliment to them ; for she had not the least acquaintance with the deceased.

Nor was this all : — Mr. Truworth, to testify his gratitude and respect, ordered a very curious monument of white marble to be erected over her remains, the model of which he drew himself, after one he had seen in Italy, and was much admired by all judges of architecture and sculpture.

If, by a secret and unfathomable intuition, the souls of the departed are permitted any knowledge of what is done below, that of Mrs. Blanchfield's must feel an extreme satisfaction, in such proofs of the esteem of him she had so tenderly and so fatally loved, as well as those of her fair friend and rival.

That generous young lady would fain have prolonged their mourning for a whole month, and consequently have put off her marriage till that time ; but this, if Mr. Truworth would have been prevailed upon to have submitted to, sir Basil and Mrs. Wellair would not agree to ; — he thought he had already sacrificed enough of the time of his promised happiness, and Mrs. Wellair was impatient to go home, though equally loth to leave her sister, till she had disposed of herself.

They were arguing on this topick one evening : — Mr. Truworth opposed Miss Harriot, as much as he durst do without danger of offending her ; but sir Basil plainly told her, that if she continued obstinate, Miss Mabel and he would finish their affair without her. — Mrs. Wellair urged the necessity there was for her return, and Mr. Truworth, encouraged by what these two had said, added, that he was certain Mrs. Blanchfield

field did not mean by what she had done, to obstruct his happiness a moment : — to which Miss Harriot, with a most obliging smile, replied, ‘ Well,’ cried she, ‘ obedience will very shortly be my duty, and I will give you a sample of it before hand : — here is my hand,’ continued she, giving it to him, ‘ make it your own as soon as you please.’

It is not to be doubted but Mr. Truworth kissed the hand she gave him, with the utmost warmth and tenderness ; but before he could make any reply to so kind a declaration, sir Basil cried out, — ‘ Well said, Harriot, — love has already wrought wonders in your heart ; — you will grant to a lover what you refuse to us.’ — ‘ Not to a lover, sir,’ answered she ; ‘ but to a person who is about to be my husband. — I think it is as ill-judged a reserve in a woman to disown her affection for the man she has consented to marry, as it would be imprudence to confess it before she has consented.’

After some farther conversation on this head, in the course of which Mr. Truworth had the opportunity of being more confirmed than ever, that the disposition of his mistress was, in every respect, such as he wished to find it ; — all that was yet wanting for the completion of the nuptials, was settled.

The second day after this was fixed for the celebration of the ceremony, after which it was determined, that the two bride-grooms with their brides, — the father of Miss Mabel, Mrs. Wellair, and two other friends, should all set out together for sir Basil’s seat in Stafford-shire, and that Mrs. Wellair should write to her husband to meet them there, that the whole family might be together on so joyful an occasion. .

C H A P. XXII.

Will prove by a remarkable instance of a high-raised hope suddenly disappointed, the extreme weakness of building our expectations upon mere conjecture.

THOUGH it is not to be imagined, that the preparations for marriages, such as those of fir Basil Loveit, and Mr. Truworth, could be an entire secret to the town, especially as neither of the parties had any motive to induce them to desire it should be so; yet Miss Betsy never heard the least syllable of any such thing being in agitation. — Those of her acquaintance, whom she at present chiefly conversed with, were either ignorant of it themselves, or had never happened to mention it in her presence; so that knowing nothing of Mr. Truworth's affairs of late, more than what the lawyer had casually related at her brother's, it is not to be wondered at, that she imagined him wholly disengaged, since the death of that lady, who had so kindly remembered him in her will.

Neither ought it (her vanity considered) to appear strange, that she was apt to flatter herself with a belief of the return of his affection to herself, when the memory of the late object of it should be utterly erased.

When there is the least probability, that what we ardently wish may come to pass, the minutest circumstance, in favour of our hopes, serves to assure us, that it certainly will do so.

Miss Betsy was going to make a visit at Whitehall; but in crossing the park happened to meet the two Miss Airishes, who asked her to take a turn with them: — to which she replied, that she would gladly accompany them, but had sent word to a lady that she was coming to pass the whole

whole evening with her. — ‘Nay,’ said the elder Miss Airish, ‘we have an engagement too at our own apartment, and can stay only to walk once up the Mall, and down again.’ — Miss Betsey replied, that would be no great loss of time, and so went with them. — They had not proceeded many yards in their promenade, before Miss Betsey saw Mr. Trueworth, with sir Basil, coming directly towards them. — The gentlemen bowed to her as they approached more near. — A sudden thought that moment starting into Miss Betsey’s head, she dropped her fan, as if by accident, as they were passing each other, just at Mr. Trueworth’s feet; — he stooped hastily to take it up, and presented it to her: — ‘I am sorry, sir,’ said she, ‘to give you this trouble.’ — ‘Whatever services, madam, are in my power to render you,’ replied he, ‘will be always a pleasure to myself.’ — No more was said; — the gentlemen and the ladies pursued their different routs. — This little adventure, however, had a prodigious effect on Miss Betsey; — she thought she saw something so gay and sparkling in the eyes of Mr. Trueworth, as denoted his mourning habit belied his heart, and that he was not much affected with the death of her, for whom decency and gratitude had obliged him to put it on.

After the gentlemen were out of hearing, the two Miss Airishes began to give their judgements upon them: — the one cried, they were both very pretty fellows; but the other accused them of want of politeness, — ‘As they saw we had no man with us,’ said she, ‘they might, methinks, have offered their service to gallant us, especially as one of them seems to be acquainted with Miss Betsey.’ — But that young lady little regarded what was said on this occasion, being too much taken up with her own cogitations; — she
repented

repeated internally the words of Mr. Trueworth, and as she was persuaded he was now at liberty to offer her all manner of services, she interpreted, that by 'whatever services were in his power,' he meant to renew his services to her as a lover. — This imagination elated her to a very high degree, but hindered her from holding any conversation with the two ladies she was with, as it was improper for her to say any thing on the subject, which so much engrossed her thoughts. They all walked together up to Buckingham-house, then turned back, and the two Miss Airishes took leave of her at St. James's; — they went into the palace, and she was proceeding towards Spring-garden, when she at a distance perceived sir Basil Loveit, Mr. Trueworth, Miss Mabel, and two ladies, whose faces she was entirely unacquainted with.

The reader will not be at a loss to guess, that these two were no other than Mrs. Weillair and Miss Harriot: — they had been that afternoon to take leave of some friends, on their going out of town, and had appointed to meet the gentlemen in the Mall; — in their way thither, they had called upon Miss Mabel, and brought her with them. — This little troop being all in the same sable livery, seemed so much of a family, as threw Miss Betsy into some sort of surprize; — she knew not that Miss Mabel had the least acquaintance with sir Basil, nor even any more with Mr. Trueworth, than having seen him a few times in her company. — As they drew nearer, she made a motion to Miss Mabel, as if she was desirous of speaking to her, — upon which that lady advanced towards her, with these words: 'I am sorry, madam,' said she, 'as you are alone, that it is improper for me to ask you to join us.' — 'I am very glad, madam,

'dam, you do not,' replied Miss Betsey, very much picqued, 'because I should be obliged to refuse you.' — She no sooner uttered these words than she passed hastily on, and Miss Mabel returned to her company, who waited for her at some paces distance.

It must be acknowledged, that Miss Betsey had cause to be alarmed at a speech of this nature, from a lady of Miss Mabel's politeness and good humour; — she thought there must be some very powerful reasons, which had obliged her to make it; and what those reasons could be, seemed at present an impenetrable secret. — She was too much disconcerted to be able to pass the whole evening, as she had promised the lady she went to she would do; — she, therefore, pretended a sudden indisposition, took her leave, and went home, in order to be at full liberty to ruminate on what had passed in the park.

She had not been many minutes in her own apartment, before she was interrupted in her meditations, by the coming of her two brothers. — Several bustos, pictures, pieces of old china, and other curiosities, belonging to a nobleman, lately deceased, being to be exposed to sale, the elder Mr. Thoughtless had an inclination to become a purchaser of such of them as he should find agreeable to his fancy, but was willing to have his sister's judgement in the matter; and it was to engage her to go with him the next morning about twelve o'clock, when the goods were to be exhibited to public view, that had occasioned him and Mr. Francis to make her this visit. — It is not to be doubted, but that she was willing to oblige him in this point; — she assured him, she would be ready against he came to call on her.

When she was alone, she began to run over in her mind, all the particulars of what had passed that

that evening in the park, and found something very extraordinary on the whole. — It had seemed extremely odd to her, that Mr. Truworth and sir Basil did not join her, and the two Miss Airishes; but then she thought she could easily account for their not doing so, and that Mr. Truworth did not chuse to enter into any conversation with her, because sir Basil had happened to see her at Miss Forward's, and might possibly have entertained no favourable idea of her on that score: — she, therefore, with a great deal of readiness excused Mr. Truworth for this omission, especially as she was possessed of the fancy, that the compliment with which he returned her fan, and the look he assumed during that action, seemed to tell her, he wished for an opportunity of adding something more tender. — But when she came to consider on the second meeting, she was indeed very much at a loss to fathom the meaning of what she had seen; — she knew a thousand accidents might have occasioned an acquaintance between Miss Mabel and sir Basil, and also, that the little she had with Mr. Truworth might have been casually improved; but could find not the least shadow of reason, why that lady should tell her, it was improper for to ask her to join company with them. — Though she had of late seen that lady less frequently than usual, yet whenever they did meet, it was with the greatest civility and appearance of friendship: — she had, in reality, a sincere regard for her, and imagined the other looked upon her with the same, and therefore could not but believe, the shyness she put on in the park, when speaking to her, must have some very powerful motive to occasion it. — Suspence was, of all things, what Miss Betsy could least bear; — she resolved to be convinced, though at the ex-

pence of that pride she would not have forfeited on any other account. — ‘In spite of the ill-manners she has treated me with,’ said she, ‘I will go once more to her, — satisfy my curiosity, as to the manner of her behaviour, and then never see her more.’

To be more sure of finding her at home, she thought it best to make the visit she intended in the morning : — accordingly she sent to her brother, that being obliged to go to a lady, who had desired to see her, she could not wait for his coming to call on her, but would not fail to meet him at the place of sale, about the hour he had mentioned. — This promise she thought it would be easy for her to perform, as she designed to stay no longer with Miss Mabel, than would be sufficient to get some light into a thing, which at present gave her so much perplexity.

She went about eleven o’clock, but was strangely surprised, on her coming to the house, to find all the windows shut up, and after the chairmen had knocked several times, the door opened by Nanny, the little prating wench, who had lived at Mr. Goodman’s. — ‘Nanny!’ cried Miss Betsey, ‘bless me, do you live here?’ — ‘Yes, madam,’ answered she, ‘I have lived here ever since my master Goodman died.’ — ‘I am glad of it,’ returned Miss Betsey? — ‘but pray is your lady at home?’ — ‘O, dear madam,’ said the girl, ‘my lady! — why, madam, don’t you know what’s done to day?’ — ‘Not I,’ replied she : — ‘prithee what dost mean? — What’s done?’ — ‘Lord, madam,’ said Nanny, ‘I wonder you should not know it; — my lady is married to day.’ — ‘Married!’ cried Miss Betsey hastily; — ‘to whom?’ — ‘To one sir Basil Loveit, madam,’ replied the other; — ‘and Mr. Trueworth is married to one Miss Harriot, sir Basil’s

‘Basil’s sister; — my old master gave both the
 ‘brides away. — I believe the ceremony is over
 ‘by this time — but as soon as it is they all bowl
 ‘away for fir Basil’s seat in Staffordshire: — they
 ‘say there will be open house kept there, and the
 ‘lord knows what doings. — All the servants are
 ‘gone, — none but poor me left to look after the
 ‘house.’ — ‘Mr. Trueworth married?’ cried
 Miss Betsy, in the greatest confusion, ‘I thought
 ‘his mistress had been dead.’ — ‘No, no, madam,’
 said Nanny; — ‘you mean Mrs. Blanchfield, —
 ‘I know all that story, — I was told it by one that
 ‘comes often here: — Mr. Trueworth, I assure
 ‘you, never courted her; — she was only in love
 ‘with him, and on hearing his engagement with
 ‘Miss Harriot, took it to heart, poor soul, and
 ‘died in a few days, and has left him half her for-
 ‘tune, and a world of fine things to Miss Harriot.’

She was going on with this tittle-tattle, but Miss
 Betsy was scarce in a condition to distinguish what
 she said; — she leaned her head back against the
 chair, and was almost fainting away. — The maid
 perceiving the change in her countenance, cried
 out, ‘Lord, Madam, you are not well, — shall I
 ‘get you any thing? — but now I think on it there
 ‘is a bottle of drops my lady left behind her in
 ‘the dressing-room, I’ll run and fetch them.’ — She
 was going to do as she said, but Miss Betsy reco-
 vering of herself, called to her to stay, saying, she
 had no occasion for any thing. — ‘Lord, Madam,’
 said she, ‘I did not think the marriage of Mr.
 ‘Trueworth would have been such a trouble to
 ‘you, or I would not have told you any thing of
 ‘it. — I am sure you might have had him if you
 ‘would, I remember well enough how he fought
 ‘for you with Mr. Staple, and how he followed
 ‘you up and down where ever you went. — For
 ‘that matter, Miss Harriot has but your leavings.’

— ‘ I give myself no trouble who has him,’ replied Miss Betsey, disdainfully, — ‘ It is not him I am thinking of; — I was only a little surprized, that Miss Mabel should make such a secret of her affairs to me. — ‘ You know, madam,’ said Nanny, ‘ that my lady is a very close woman; — but I wonder, indeed, she should tell you nothing of it, for I have heard her speak the kindest things of you.’ — ‘ Well, it is no matter,’ replied Miss Betsey: — farewell, Nanny,’ — Then bid the chairmen go on. — The confusion she was in, hindered her from directing the chairmen where to go; — so they were carrying her home again, ’till she saw herself at the end of the street where she lived; but then recollecting all at once where she had appointed to meet her brothers, she ordered them to go to Golden Square.

It seemed as if fate interested itself in a peculiar manner, for the mortification of this young lady; — every thing contributed to give her the most poignant shock her soul could possibly sustain: — it was not enough that she had heard the cruel tidings of what she looked upon as the greatest of misfortunes, her eyes must also be witness of the stabbing confirmation: — the place of sale was within two houses of Sir Basil’s; but as she had never heard where that gentleman lived, could have no apprehensions of the spectacle she was to be presented with. — On her chair turning into the square, she saw that side of it, to which she had directed the men to carry her, crowded with coaches, horses, and a great concourse of people, some waiting for the bridal bounty, but more as idle spectators. — At first, she imagined it was on the account of the sale, but the same instant almost shewed her her mistake.

Several footmen with wedding favours in their hats, two of whom she knew by their faces, as well

well as by their liveries, belonged to Mr. Trueworth, were just mounting their horses:—the crowd was so thick about the door, that it was with some difficulty the chair passed on, and she had an opportunity of seeing much more than she desired.—There were three coaches and six:—in the first, went sir Basil and the new-made lady Loveit, the father of Miss Mabel, and a young lady whom Miss Betsy had sometimes seen in her company;—in the second, were seated Mr. Trueworth, his bride, Mrs. Wellair, and a grave old gentleman;—the third was filled by four maid servants, and the two valet de chambres of the two bridegrooms, with a great deal of luggage before and behind.—The ladies and gentlemen were all in extreme rich riding habits, and the footmen, eleven in number, being all in new liveries, and spruce fellows, the whole cavalcade altogether made a very genteel appearance.

Miss Betsy, in spite of the commotions in her breast, could not forbear standing a little in the hall, after she had got out of her chair, till the whole had passed,—‘Well,’ said she, to herself, with a deep sigh, ‘all is over, and I must think no more of Truworth;—but wherefore am I thus alarmed?—He has long since been lost to me, nor did I love him.’

She assumed all the courage her pride could supply her with, and had tolerably composed herself before she went up into the sale room;—yet not so much but a paleness, mixed with a certain confusion, appeared in her countenance. Mr. Munden, who happened to be there, as well as her brothers, took notice of it, and asked, if she was not well? To which she replied, with an uncommon presence of mind, that she was in perfect health, but had been frightened as she came along, by a great black ox, who, by the

carelessness of the drivers, had like to have run his horns quite into the chair. — Mr. Munden, who never wanted politeness, and knew how to put on the most tender air whenever he pleased, expressed an infinity of concern for the accident she mentioned; and this behaviour in him she either relished very well, or seemed to do so.

What credit her brothers gave to the story of the ox is uncertain: — they, as well as all the company in the room, had been drawn to the windows, by the noise of the cavalcade, which had set out from sir Basil's. — Every one was talking of it when Miss Betsy entered, and 'tis very probable the two Mr. Thoughtlesses might imagine it had an effect upon her, in spite of the indifference she had always pretended; — they were, however, too prudent to take any notice, especially as Mr. Munden was present.

Whatever were the troubles of this young lady, her spirit enabled her to conceal them, and she gave her opinion of the goods to be disposed on, with as much exactitude, as if her mind had been taken up with no other thing.

Mr. Thoughtless made a purchase of the twelve Cæsars in bronze, and two fruit pieces of Varel's, and Mr. Munden, on Miss Betsy's expressing her liking of two very large curious jars, bought them, and presented them to her.

Nothing material passed here; but the sale being over for that day, every one returned to their respective habitations, or wherever business, or inclination called them.

Contains among other particulars, an example of forgiving goodness and generosity, worthy the imitation of as many as shall read it.

THE constraint Miss Betsy had put on herself, while in the presence of the company she had been with, had been extremely painful to her; but when she got home she gave a loose to tears, that common relief of sorrows: — yet amidst all these testimonies of a violent affection for Mr. Truworth, she would not allow herself to imagine, that she was possessed of any for him, — nor that the vexation she was in proceeded from any other motive, than that of finding a heart, that had once been devoted to her, capable of submitting to the charms of any other woman.

All she could bring herself to acknowledge was only, that she had been very much to blame, in treating the proposals of Mr. Truworth in the light manner she had done; — she now wondered at herself for having been so blind to the merits of Mr. Truworth's family, estate, person, and accomplishments, and accused herself with the utmost severity, for having rejected, what she could not but confess, would have been highly for her interest, honour, and happiness to have accepted.

Thus deeply was she buried in a too late repentance, when a letter was brought to her, the superscription of which was wrote in a hand altogether unknown to her; — on opening it, she found the contents as follows:

Marshalsea Prison.

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'MADAM,

'**A**fter the just, though severe resolution your last informed me you had taken, of never
'seeing,

‘ feeling, nor receiving any thing from me more,
‘ I tremble to approach you. — Fearing you
‘ would not vouchsafe to open this, knowing from
‘ whence it came, I got a person to direct it for
‘ you, and cannot assure myself you will, even
‘ now, examine the contents so far, as to see the
‘ motive which emboldens me to give you this
‘ trouble.

‘ I have long since rendered myself unworthy
‘ of your friendship; — it is solely your compas-
‘ sion and charity that I now implore: — the date
‘ of this petition, in part, will shew the calamity
‘ I labour under. — I have languished in this
‘ wretched prison for upwards of a month, for
‘ debts my luxury contracted, and which I vain-
‘ ly expected would be discharged by those, who
‘ called themselves my admirers? but, alas! all
‘ the return they make for favours they so ardently
‘ requested is contempt. — I have been obliged to
‘ make away with every thing their gallantry be-
‘ stowed, for my support.

‘ All the partners of my guilty pleasures, all
‘ those who shared with me in my riots, are deaf
‘ to my complaints, and refuse a pitying ear to the
‘ distress they have in a great measure contributed
‘ to bring upon me. — My creditors, more merci-
‘ ful than my friends or lovers, have consented to
‘ withdraw their actions, and I shall have my dis-
‘ charge on paying the fees of this loathsome pri-
‘ son; — three guineas will be sufficient to restore
‘ my liberty, which, if I am so fortunate once more
‘ to obtain, I will think no labour, though ever so
‘ bad or abject, too much, if it can enable me to
‘ drag on my remains of life in true penitence.

‘ Dear madam, if, by favouring me with the
‘ sum I mention, you are so good as to open my pri-
‘ son gates, heaven will, I doubt not, reward the
‘ generous bounty; and if the Almighty will
‘ vouchsafe

vouchsafe to hear the prayers of an abandoned creature like me, I shall never cease to invoke his choicest blessings may be showered down on the head of my charming deliverer.

‘ I shall send to-morrow morning by a poor honest woman, whom I can confide in, for your answer. — I beseech you to be assured, that if once freed from this detested place, no temptations of what kind soever shall ever prevail upon me to return to my yet more detested former course of life, and am determined to fly to some remote corner of the kingdom, as distant from London as from Leicestershire, and there endeavour to earn a wretched pittance, by means how low soever I care not. — Your grant of the request I make you at this time, will save both the soul and body of her, who is,

‘ With the most unfeigned contrition,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ And most unfortunate servant,

‘ A. FORWARD.’

Utterly impossible was it for this unhappy creature to have sent her petition at a more unlucky time : — Miss Betsy, full of the idea of the misfortune she had sustained in the loss of Mr. Trueworth, could not be reminded of Miss Forward, without being also reminded, that the first occasion of his disgust was owing to her acquaintance with that woman.

‘ Infamous creature !’ cried Miss Betsy as soon as she had done reading ; — ‘ she deserves no compassion from the world, much less from me. — No, — no, there are but too many objects of charity to be found, and I shall not lavish the little bounty I am able to bestow on a wretch like her.’

These

These were the first reflections of Miss Betsey, on receiving so unexpected a petition, but they soon subsided, and gave way to others of a more gentle nature; — ‘Yet,’ said she, ‘if the poor wretch is sensible of her faults, and truly resolved to do as she pretends, it would be the utmost cruelty to deny her the means of fulfilling the promise she makes of amendment.’

‘How unhappy is our sex,’ continued she, ‘either in a too much, or too little sensibility of the tender passion; — she was, alas! too easily influenced by the flatteries of the base part of mankind, and I too little grateful to the merits of the best.’

In fine, the natural goodness of her disposition got the ascendant over all considerations that opposed the grant of Miss Forward’s request. — ‘My acquaintance with her has been fatal to me,’ said she; ‘but that was less owing to her fault than my own folly.’

Accordingly she sent by the woman, who came next morning, as mentioned in the letter, four guineas enclosed in a piece of paper, and wrote to her in these terms:

To Miss FORWARD.

‘MADAM,
‘**T**HOUGH I cannot but look upon your misfortunes as justly fallen on you, yet heartily commiserate them: — if your penitence be sincere, I doubt not but you will some way or other be enabled to pursue a more laudable course of life, than that which has brought you into this distress. — I add one guinea to the sum you requested, and wish it were in my power to do more, being

‘Your real well-wisher,

‘And humble servant,

‘B. THOUGHTLESS.’

Though

Though no one could have more refined notions of virtue, nor a greater abhorrence for vice, than this young lady, yet did she never hate the perpetrators of the guilty, nor would judge with that severity of their faults, which some others, much less innocent, are apt to do.

It pleased her to think that by this donation she should gladden the heart of an afflicted person, who had been of her acquaintance, how unworthy however of late she had rendered herself; and this little interruption of her meditations contributed good deal to compose her mind, after the sudden shock it had sustained on the score of Mr. Trueworth's marriage.

But she had very shortly another, and more agreeable relief: — sir Ralph and lady Trusty came to town; — which she no sooner was informed of, and where a house had been taken for their reception, than she went early the next morning to pay her respects, and testify the real satisfaction she conceived at their arrival.

Nothing of business would probably have been said to her on this first visit, if her two brothers had not come in immediately after. — The first compliments on such an occasion being over: — ‘sir Ralph,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘we have wished for your coming to town on many accounts, but on none so much as that of my sister, who is going to be married, and has only waited to intreat you will do her the favour of disposing of her hand.’

The good baronet replied, that there was nothing he should do with greater pleasure, provided it were to a person worthy of her. — ‘That, sir,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘we have taken care to be convinced of, and I doubt not but you will think as we do, when you shall be informed
‘of

‘ of the particulars.’ — Miss Betsey blushed, but uttered not a word, either to oppose, or to agree to what had been said.

Lady Trusty perceiving her in some confusion, led her into another room, in order to talk seriously to her, on many things she had in her head.

C H A P. XXIV.

Is very full of business.

THE two brothers of Miss Betsey having some reason to apprehend, she would still find some pretence, if possible, to evade fulfilling the promise she had made them, in regard to Mr. Munden, and also, that he, finding himself trifled with, might become weary of prosecuting so unavailing a suit, and break off as Mr. Trueworth had done, resolved to omit nothing in their power for bringing to a conclusion an affair, which seemed to them so absolutely necessary for securing the honour of their family, in that of their sister.

They suspected, that her putting off the marriage till the arrival of sir Ralph and lady Trusty, was only to gain time, and invent some excuse to get that lady on her side : — they therefore judged it highly proper to acquaint her previously with the motives, which made them so impatient to see their sister disposed of, and by that means prevent her ladyship from being prepossessed by any ideas the other might prepare for that purpose.

Accordingly, Mr. Francis Thoughtless having been informed by letter, of the day in which they intended to be in town, he went on horseback, and met them at the inn where they dined, about twenty miles from London.

That

That good lady was so much troubled at the recital he made her of Miss Betsy's late adventures, that she could not forbear letting fall some tears; and though she laid the blame of her ill-conduct chiefly on her having lived so long under the tuition and example of a woman, such as lady Mellasin; yet she could not but allow there was a certain vanity in her composition, as dangerous to virtue, as to reputation, and that marriage was the only defence for both.

Sir Ralph, who was an extreme facetious, good-natured man, was a little pleasant on what his lady had said on this occasion.—‘ You forget, my dear,’ cried he, ‘ how many ladies of late have broke the conjugal hoop, and think themselves justified in doing so, by having been prevailed upon to enter into it without inclination.—Remember the words of the humorous poet Hudibras :

“ Wedlock without love, some say,

“ Is but a lock without a key ;

“ And ’tis a kind of rape to marry

“ One, who neglects, or cares not for ye ;

“ For what does make it ravishment,

“ But being against the mind’s consent.’

‘ Does Miss Betsy,’ continued he, to Mr. Francis, ‘ love the gentleman you would have her marry?’—To which the other replied, ‘ That the temper of his sister was too capricious for any one to be able to judge of the real situation of her heart, or even for herself to be perfectly assured of it.’

He then proceeded to inform him how long Mr. Munden had courted her, and of the great encouragement she had always given to his addresses :--- her submitting the decision of the affair to the elder Mr. Thoughtless’s inspection into the circumstances of his estate, which being found agreeable to the report made of it, she now only waited, or pretended

to wait, for the approbation of Sir Ralph, as being by her father's will constituted her guardian.

‘Well then,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘since it is so, and you are all desirous it should be a match, I shall not fail to give my verdict accordingly.’

As impatient as the two brothers were to see her married, and out of the way of those temptations she at present lay under, they could not be more so than lady Trusty now was;—she doubted not, that the virtue and good sense of that young lady, would render her a very good wife, when once she was made one, and therefore heartily wished to see her settled in the world, even though it were to less advantage, than her beauty, and the many good qualities she was possessed of might entitle her to expect.

It was in order to do every thing in her power to bring about what she thought so good a work, that she had drawn Miss Betsy from the company, and retired with her into the closet, in the manner already related.

Miss Betsy, who knew nothing of all this, or even that her brother had gone to meet them on the road, was extremely surprized to find by the discourse, with which lady Trusty entertained her, that no part of what happened to her, ever since the death of Mr. Goodman, was a secret to her ladyship.

She presently saw, however, it must be by her brother Frank, that this intelligence had been given, and was not at all at a loss to guess the motive of his having done it.—‘I find, madam,’ said she, ‘that all the errors and inadvertencies I have been guilty of are betrayed to you, and am far from being sorry they are so, since the gentle reproofs you take the trouble to give me, are so many fresh marks of the friendship with which you vouchsafe to honour me, and which I shall always esteem as my greatest happiness.—I flatter myself,

‘self,

‘ self, however, continued she, that the remembrance of what has lately befallen me, and the imminent dangers I have escaped will enable me to regulate my conduct, in such a manner, as to give your ladyship no farther pain on my account.’

Lady Trufty on this embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and told her, that there were few things she either wished or hoped for with greater ardency, than to see her happily settled, and freed from all temptations of what kind soever.

This worthy lady then fell on the subject of Mr. Munden, and recapitulated all the arguments which had been already urged, to persuade her to come to a determination :—in fine, she left nothing unsaid, that was suitable to the occasion.

Miss Betsy listened to her with the most submissive attention, and after a short pause, replied in these terms :—‘ Madam,’ said she, ‘ I am convinced by my own reason, as well as by what your ladyship has been pleased to say, that I have indeed gone too far with Mr. Munden to be able to go back with honour, and since I find he has the approbation of all my friends, shall no longer attempt to trifle with his pretensions.’

‘ You will marry him then,’ cried lady Trufty ? — ‘ Yes, madam,’ answered Miss Betsy ; and added, though not without some hesitation, ‘ since my marriage is a thing so much desired by those, to whose will I shall always be ready to submit, Mr. Munden has certainly a right to expect I should decide in his favour.’

She said no more, but hung down her head, and lady Trufty was going to make some reply, — perhaps to ask how far her heart acquiesced in the consent her tongue had given, but was prevented by Sir Ralph, who pushed open the door of the room where they were, told her, she engrossed his fair

charge too long ;——that it was now time for himself, and her brothers to have some share in their conversation.

‘ Some polite wives, Sir Ralph,’ said lady Trusty, laughing, ‘ would not have excused so abrupt a breaking in on their privacy, and I assure you, if you had interrupted us a moment sooner, you might have spoiled all ; for Miss Betsy has but just given me her promise to marry Mr. Munden.’

‘ I should have been heartily sorry indeed,’ said he, ‘ if my over zeal had rendered me a Marplot on this occasion ;——but come,’ continued he, ‘ since the young lady has at last resolved, let us carry the joyful news to her brothers.’

In speaking these words he gave one of his hands to lady Trusty, and the other to Miss Betsy, and led them into the dining room, where the Mr. Thoughtlesses were : —— ‘ Well, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘ your sister has at last consented to give you a brother, — pray thank her for the addition she is going to make to your family.’

‘ I hope,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ she will find her own happiness in doing so.---The younger added something to the same purpose.---After this the conversation turned chiefly on the solid satisfaction of a married life, in which Miss Betsy took but little part, only saying to her two brothers :——‘ Well, ——since both of you have so high an opinion of matrimony, and will needs have me, who am by some years younger than either of you, lead the way, I hope I shall soon see you follow the example.’

‘ Our elder brother,’ said Mr. Francis, ‘ may, doubtless, marry whenever he pleases ; and as for my part, when it can be proved that I have an offer made me, equally advantageous to what you have rejected, and I should refuse it, I could not be
‘ angry

‘angry with the world for condemning my want of judgment.’

‘No more of that,’ cried Sir Ralph ;——‘you see she hears reason at last.’—Lady Trusty would fain have persuaded the gentlemen to stay dinner there, but they excused themselves, as expecting company at home, and said, if possible they would return towards evening ;——she would not however permit Miss Betsy to take leave, and her continuing there that whole day happened to bring things somewhat sooner to a conclusion, than perhaps they otherwise would have been.

Mr. Munden, as soft and complaisant as he carried it to Miss Betsy, was very much disgusted in his mind at her late behaviour ;——he found she loved him not, and was far from having any violent inclination for her himself ; but the motives, which had made him persevere in his courtship, after being convinced of the indifference she had for him, made him also impatient to bring the affair to as speedy a result as possible.——Sir Ralph was the last person to whom she had referred the matter ;——he had heard by accident of that gentleman’s arrival, and went to her lodgings, in order to see in what manner she would now receive him ; but not finding her at home, called at the house of Mr. Thoughtless, who had always been very propitious to his suit.

On the two brothers returning from Sir Ralph’s, they met him just coming out of the house :——the elder desired him to walk in—told him with a great deal of freedom, that Sir Ralph was come to town ; — that the business having been communicated to him, he approved of the match, and his sister had consented.——Mr. Munden received this information with all the seeming transport of a man passionately in love :— he made them a thousand retributions for the part they had taken in his interest,

and they expressed no less satisfaction in the accomplishment of his desires.---After some few compliments on both sides, the elder Mr. Thoughtless informed him, that Miss Betsy was to stay the whole day with Sir Ralph and lady Trusty ;---that himself and brother had promised to return thither in the evening, and that he should be glad if he would accompany them, in order that when they were all together, every thing might be settled for the completion of the nuptials.

It is not to be doubted but that the lover readily embraced this proposition, and an hour for his waiting on them being prefixed, he took his leave, the company that was to dine with Mr. Thoughtless that instant coming in.

CH A P. XXV.

Will not let the Reader fall asleep.

I Believe the reader will easily perceive, that it was owing to the apprehensions of Miss Betsy's fluctuating disposition, that her brothers testified so great an impatience for bringing the affair of her marriage to a conclusion ; and also, that it was to confirm her in her resolution, and reconcile her to the promise she had made, that lady Trusty had kept her with her that whole day.

The arguments urged by that worthy lady ;---the obliging and chearful manner in which they were delivered, joined to the facetious and entertaining remarks, which Sir Ralph had occasionally made, had, indeed, a great effect for the present, on the too wavering and uncertain mind they were intended to fix.

Though she was far from expecting Mr. Munden would come that evening with her brothers, or even from imagining, he could as yet be informed

of what had passed in his favour ; yet she was not displeased when she saw him enter, and if she looked a little confounded, it was rather to be attributed to modesty than anger.

That gentleman having made his first compliments to Sir Ralph and lady Trusty, on his being presented to them, flew directly to Miss Betsy, and expressed his sense of the happiness her brothers had made him hope, in terms, the most passionate that words could form ;—she received what he said to her, on this occasion, with a sweetness which must have infinitely charmed a heart truly sensible of the tender passion :—that of Mr. Munden, though less delicate than he pretended, could not but be greatly affected with it.

In fine, the behaviour of both towards each other, gave great contentment to all the friends of Miss Betsy ; and her elder brother, for form's sake, recapitulating the proposal of Mr. Munden, concerning her settlement and jointure, Sir Ralph gave that approbation in public, which he before had done in private : — the intended bridegroom and Mr. Thoughtless agreed to go together the next morning to Mr. Markland the lawyer, and give him the necessary instructions for drawing up the marriage articles.

They broke not up company till the night was pretty far advanced, and Mr. Thoughtless not having his own coach there, a hackney set them all down at their respective habitations.

Thus far all went extremely well : — the parties chiefly concerned seemed perfectly satisfied with each other, and with themselves, for the agreement they had mutually entered into, and there appeared not the least likelihood of any future difficulty that would arise to interrupt, or delay the consummation of the so much desired nuptials.

Miss Betsey had not as yet had time to meditate on what she had given her promise to perform:—the joy she found her compliance had given all her friends,——the endearing things they said to her upon the occasion, and the transport Mr. Munden had expressed, on seeing himself so near the end of all his wishes, had kept up her spirits, and she imagined, while in their presence, that her inclination had dictated the consent her lips had uttered.

But when she was alone,---shut up in her own apartment;—when she no longer received the kind caresses of her smiling friends, nor the flattering raptures of her future husband, all the lively ideas, which their conversation and manner of behaviour towards her had inspired, vanished at once, and gave place to fancies, which might justly bear the name of splenetic.

‘I must now look upon myself,’ said she, ‘as already married:--- I have promised,-- it is too late to think of retracting.--- A few days hence, I suppose, will oblige me to the performance of my promise, and I may say with Monimia in the play.

“I have bound up for myself a weight of cares,
“And how the burthen will be borne none
“knows.”

‘I wonder,’ continued she, ‘what can make the generality of Women so fond of marrying? - -It looks to me like an infatuation.--- Just as if it were not a greater pleasure to be courted, complimented, admired, and addressed by a number, than be confined to one, who from a slave becomes a master, and, perhaps, uses his authority in a manner disagreeable enough.’

‘And yet it is expected from us.---One has no sooner left off one’s bib and apron, than people cry,---‘Miss will soon be married.’---And this man, and that man, is presently picked out for
‘a husband.

‘ a husband.---Mighty ridiculous ! ---they want to
‘ deprive us of all the pleasures of life, just when
‘ one begins to have a relish for them.’

In this humour she went to bed, nor did sleep present her with images more pleasing ; --- sometimes she imagined herself standing on the brink of muddy, troubled waters ; ---at others, that she was wandering through deserts, overgrown with thorns and briars ; or seeking to find a passage through some ruined building, whose tottering roof seemed ready to fall upon her head, and crush her to pieces.

These gloomy representations, amidst her broken slumbers, when vanished, left behind them an uncommon heaviness upon her waking mind : --- she rose ; ---but it was only to throw herself into a chair, where she sat for a considerable time, like one quite stupid and dead to all sensations, of every kind.

At last, remembering, that they were all to dine at her brother's that day, by appointment, she roused herself as well as she was able, and started from the posture she had been in : --- ‘ I see I am at the
‘ end of all my happiness,’ said she, ‘ and that my
‘ whole future life is condemned to be a scene of
‘ disquiet ; --- but there is no resisting destiny ; ---
‘ they will have it so : ---I have promised, and must
‘ submit.’

On opening a little cabinet, in which she always kept those things she most valued, in order to take out some ornaments to put on that day, the picture of Mr. Truworth stared her in the face. ---
‘ Ah !’ said she, taking it up, and looking attentively upon it, ‘ if my brother Frank and lady
‘ Trusty had been in town, when the original of
‘ this made his addresses to me, I should then, as
‘ now, have been compelled to have given my
‘ hand. ---It is likely too I should have yielded
‘ with

‘ with the same reluctance.——Blinded by my vanity,——led by a mistaken pride,——I had not considered the value I ought to have set upon his love.——He had not then done any thing for me more than any other man, who pretended courtship to me, would have done.——I know not how it is, I did not then think him half so agreeable as I now find he is.——What a sweetness is there in these eyes!’ cried she, still looking on the picture.——‘ What an air of dignity in every feature!——Wit,——virtue,——barbery,——generosity,——and every amiable quality that can adorn mankind, methinks are here compris’d.’

‘ But to what purpose do I now see all these perfections in him’ went she on.——‘ He is the right of another; —he has given himself to one, who knows better than my unhappy self to do justice to such exalted merit:——he thinks no more of me, and I must henceforth think no more of him.’

She ended these words with a deep sigh, and some tears, then laid the picture up, and endeavoured to compose herself as well as she could.

She was but just drest when Mr. Munden came to wait on her, and conduct her to her brother’s, where they were to dine:——he told her, he had been with the elder Mr. Thoughtless at the lawyer’s about the writings; ——‘ so that now, my angel,’ said he, I flatter myself, that my days of languishment are near a period.’

He took the freedom of accompanying these words with a pretty warm embrace. ——‘ Forbear, Mr. Munden,’ cried she, with the most forbidding coldness; ——‘ you have yet no right to liberties of this nature.’

‘ Cruel and unkind Miss Betsy!’ resumed he; ——‘ must nothing then be allowed to love, and
‘ all

‘all be left to law?’ — He then went on with some discourses of the passion he had for her, and the joy he felt in the thoughts of his approaching happiness:—to all which she made very short replies, ’till at last it came into her head to interrupt him in the midst of a very tender exclamation, by saying,——‘Mr. Munden, I forgot to mention one thing to you; but it is not yet too late, — I suppose you design to keep a coach?’

This a little startled him, and looking upon her with a very grave air,——‘Madam,’ said he, ‘you are sensible my estate will not permit me to oblige you in this point.’---‘And can you imagine I will ever marry to trudge on foot,’ cried she?

‘I should be both sorry and ashamed,’ replied he, ‘to see you do that; but there are other conveniencies, which will, I hope, content you, ’till fortune puts it in my power to do otherwise.’

He then reminded her of the expectations she had frequently heard him make mention of, concerning his hopes of soon obtaining, both an honourable and lucrative employment, and assured her, that as soon as he had procured a grant of it, he would set up an equipage accordingly.

But this did not at all satisfy her;— she insisted on having a coach directly, and gave him some hints, as if she would not marry without one, which very much nettling him, he desired she would remember her promise, which was absolutely given, without the least mention of a coach being made.

‘I would not have you,’ said she, ‘insist too much on that promise, lest I should be provoked to give you the same answer Leonora, in the play, gives to her importunate lover:

“That boasted promise ties me not to time.

“And bonds without a date, they say ^{made no} but agreed with

Mr. Munden could not now contain his temper ; ---he told her, he could not have expected such treatment, after his long services, and her favourable acceptance of them :---that he thought he merited, at least, a shew of kindness from her ; and in fine, that she did not act towards him as became a woman of honour.

This was a reproach, which the spirit of Miss Betsey was too high to bear ; ---she blushed with indignation, and casting the most disdainful look upon him, was about to make some answer, which, perhaps, in the humour he then was, would have occasioned him to retort in such a manner, as might have broken off all the measures which had been so long concerting, if a sudden interruption had not prevented it.

Mr. Francis Thoughtless not knowing any thing of Mr. Munden's being there, and happening to pass that way, called on his sister to know if she was ready to go his brother's, it being near dinner time ; ---he immediately perceived, by both their countenances, that some *brulée* had happened between them, and on his asking, in a gay manner, the cause of it, Mr. Munden made no scruple to relate the sum of what had passed.---The brother of Miss Betsey, though in his heart very much vexed with her, affected to treat what Mr. Munden had said as a *bagatelle*, and calling to his sister's footman to get a hackney coach to the door, made them both go with him to his brother's, saying, They would there adjust every thing.

C H A P.

‘ Cruel

—‘ must ne

C H A P. XXVI.

Contains among other particulars, certain bridal admonitions.

THOUGH Mr. Francis Thoughtless did not judge it convenient to reproach his sister in the presence of Mr. Munden, on the complaints of that gentleman ; yet she had no sooner vented the little spleen she had been that instant possessed of, than she began to accuse herself of having been too poignant to a person, whom she had promis'd to make her husband.

To atone, therefore, for the severity of her late behaviour,---‘ This is a good handsome clean hack,’ said she, with a smile ; --‘ one would think my fellow had pitched on such a one on purpose, to keep me from regretting my not having one of my own.’

‘ I only wish, madam,’ replied Mr. Munden, ‘ that you might be reconciled to such things as are in my power to accommodate you with, ’till I am so happy to present you with every thing you can desire.’---‘ Let us talk no more of that,’ cried she ;---‘ be assured that whatever I may have said, I am far from thinking the happiness of life consists in grandeur.’

Mr. Munden, on these words, kissed her hand, and she permitted him to hold it between his, till they came out of the coach.

This, indeed, had been the very last effort of all the maiden pride and vanity of Miss Betsy, and Mr. Munden henceforward had no reason to complain of her behaviour towards him.

Sir Ralph Trusty, in regard to his age and character, had the honour of nominating the day for the celebration of their nuptials, and Miss Betsy made no excuses, in order to protract the time, but agreed

with as much readiness, as her future bridegroom could have wished.

The good lady Trusty, as well as the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, however, being not yet able to assure themselves, that nothing was to be feared from the uncertainty of her temper, did every thing in their power to keep her in good humour with her fate :---and to their endeavours it may, perhaps, be ascribed, much more than to the force of her own resolution, that she ceased to be guilty of any thing that might give the least cause of discontent to Mr. Munden, or betray that which, in spite of all she could do, preyed upon herself.

To these assiduities of her friends, another motive might also be added, for the keeping up her spirits, which was that of her mind being continually employed :---Mr. Munden had taken a very handsome house ;---the upholsterer received all the orders for the furnishing it from her.——There were besides many other things necessary for the rendering it compleat, that were not in his province to supply :——the going, therefore, to shops and ware-houses for that purpose, took a very great part of her time.——What could be spared from these, and some other preparations for her wedding, either lady Trusty, or her brothers, had the address to engage :——one or other of them were always with her, 'till the night was far advanced, and sleep became more welcome than any meditations she could indulge.

The appointed day at length arrived ;——she was conducted to the altar by Sir Ralph Trusty, where being met by Mr. Munden, the ceremony of marriage was performed,——none being present at it but lady Trusty, and her two brothers ; for as she could not have it celebrated with that pomp and eclat, agreeable to a woman of her humour,
she

she had earnestly desired it might be done with all the privacy imaginable.

The indissoluble knot now tied, they proceeded to Pontac's, where an elegant entertainment being prepared for them, by Mr. Munden's orders, they dined, and afterwards went altogether, to a lodging Mr. Munden had hired for a small time, in a little village five or six miles from London.

This he had done to oblige his bride who had told him, she desired to be lost to the world, 'till the first discourse of their marriage should be over, to avoid the visits and congratulations of their friends on that occasion.

It would be needless to tell the reader, that there was a general scene of joy amidst this little company: — Mr. Munden expressed, and indeed felt, an infinity of transport, on having triumphed over so many difficulties, which had for a long time continually risen to impede his wishes. — The two Mr. Thoughtlesses were extremely overjoyed, on thinking a period was put to all their cares in relation to their sister: — lady Trusty also, and Sir Ralph looking on this marriage, as things were circumstanced, highly convenient for Miss Betsy, were very much pleased; — so that it must necessarily follow, that an event, which cost so much pains to bring about, must occasion a general contentment in the minds of all those, who had so strenuously laboured for it.

Amidst this scene of joy, Miss Betsy herself was the only person whose countenance discovered the least pensiveness; nor was her's any more than what might be attributed to the modesty of a virgin bride.

Lady Trusty, however, who had observed her all day with an attentive eye, thought it proper to give her some admonitions, concerning her future behaviour, before she took her leave.

To this end, she drew her into another room, apart from the company, and having told her, she had something of moment to say to her, began to entertain her in the following manner :

‘ My dear child,’ said she, ‘ you are now, I fear, more through your compliance with the desires of your friends, than through your own inclination, entered into a state, the happiness of which greatly depends on the part you act in the first scenes of it :—there are some Women, who think they can never testify too much fondness for their husbands, and that the name of wife is a sufficient sanction for giving a loose to the utmost excesses of an extravagant and romantic passion ;—but this is a weakness, which I am pretty certain you will stand in no need of my advice to guard against.—I am rather apprehensive of your running into a contrary extreme, equally dangerous to your future peace, as to that of your husband.—A constant and unmoved insensibility will in time chill the most warm affection, and, perhaps, raise suspicions in him of the cause, which would be terrible indeed ;—beware, therefore, I conjure you, how you affect to despise, or treat with any marks of contempt, or even of too much coldness, a tenderness which he has a right to expect you should return in kind, as far at least as modesty and discretion will permit you to bestow.

‘ As to your conduct in family affairs,’ continued this good lady, ‘ I would have you always confine yourself to such things, as properly appertain to your own province, never interfering with such as belong to your husband :—be careful to give to him all the rights of his place, and at the same time maintain your own, though without seeming to be too tenacious of them.—If any dispute happen to arise between you, concerning superiority, though in matters of the slightest moment,
‘ rather

‘ rather recede a little from your due, than contend too far ; but let him see you yield more to oblige him, than because you think yourself bound to do so.’

‘ Mr. Munden, I flatter myself, has every qualification to make you happy, and to shew that your friends, in advising you to marry him, have not mislaid your choice ; but as perfection is not to be found on this side the grave, and the very best of us are not exempt from the frailties of human nature, whatever errors he may happen to fall into, as it does not become you to reprimand him, I wish you would never take notice you have observed them.—A man of the strictest honour and good sense may sometimes slip,——be guilty of some slight forgetfulnesses ; but then he will recover of himself, and be ashamed of his mistake,——Whereas reproaches only serve to harden the indignant mind, and make it rather chuse to persevere in the vices it detests, than to return to the virtues it admires, if warned by the remonstrances of another.’

‘ But above all things,’ added she, ‘ I would wish you to consider, that those too great gaieties of life you have hitherto indulged, which, however innocent, could not escape censure while in a single state, will now have a much worse aspect in a married one.’

‘ Mistake me not, my dear,’ pursued she, after a pause, finding by miss Betsy’s countenance, that what she had said on this score had stung her to the quick, ‘ I would not have you deprive yourself of those pleasures of life which are becoming your sex, your age, and character ;——there is no necessity that because you are a wife you should become a mope : - I only recommend a proper medium in these things.’

Her ladyship was going on, when miss Betsey's servants, whom she had ordered to bring such part of her baggage as she thought would be needful while she stayed in that place, came with it into the chamber, on which this kind adviser told her fair friend, that she would refer what she had farther to say on these subjects, 'till another opportunity.

Miss Betsey replied, that she would treasure up in her heart all the admonitions she would at any time be pleased to give her, and that she hoped her future conduct would demonstrate, that no part of what her ladyship had said was lost upon her.

With these words they returned into the dining-room, and the close of day soon after coming in, Sir Ralph and his lady, with the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, took leave of the bride and bridegroom, and came back to town.

CH A P. XXVII.

Seems to demand, for more reasons than one, a greater share of attention than ordinary, in the perusal of it.

THE fair wife of mr. Munden,——Miss Betsey now no more,——had promised nothing at the altar, that she was not resolved religiously to perform ;——she began seriously to consider on the duties of her place ;——she was ignorant of no part of them, and soon became fully convinced, that on a strict observance of them depended her honour,—her reputation,—her peace of mind, and, in fine, all that was dear to a woman of virtue and understanding.

To give the more weight to these reflections, she also called to her mind the long perseverance of Mr. Munden ;——his constant assiduities to please her,——his patient submitting to all the little caprices of

of her humour ; and establishing in herself an assured belief of the ardour and sincerity of his affection for her, her gratitude, her good nature, and good sense, much more than compensated for the want of inclination ; — and without any of those languishments, — those violent emotions, which bear the name of love, rendered her capable of giving more real and more valuable proofs of that passion, than are sometimes to be found amongst those, who profess themselves, and are looked upon by the world as the most fond wives.

In spite of her endeavours, the thoughts of Mr. Truworth would, however, sometimes come into her mind, but she repelled them with all her might ; and as the merits of that gentleman would, in reality, admit of no comparison with any thing that Mr. Munden had to boast of, she laboured to over-balance the perfections of the one, by that tender and passionate affection with which she flattered herself she now was, and always would be regarded by the other.

Thus happily disposed to make the bonds she had entered into easy to herself, and perfectly agreeable to the person with whom she was engaged, he had indeed a treasure in her beyond what he could ever have imagined, or her friends, from her former behaviour, had any reason to have expected ; and had he been truly sensible of the value of the jewel he possessed, he would have certainly been compleatly blessed ; — but happiness is not in the power of every one to enjoy, tho' heaven and fortune denies nothing to their wishes ; — but of this hereafter.

At present, all was joy and transport on the side of the Bride-groom ; — all complaisance and sweetness on that of the Bride : — their whole deportment to each other was such, as gave the most promising expectations of a lasting harmony between them, and gladdened the hearts of as many as saw it, and interested

terested themselves in the felicity of either of them.

They continued but a few days in the retirement, which had been made choice of for the consummation of their nuptials :—Mr. Munden was naturally gay,—loved company, and all the modest diversions of the times :—and his wife, who, as the whole course of this history has shewn, had been always fond of them to an excess, and whose humour, in this point, was very little altered by the change of her condition, readily embraced the first proposal he made of returning to town, believing she should now have courage enough to appear in public, without testifying any of that shamefacedness on account of her marriage, which he knew would subject her to the ridicule of those of her acquaintance, who had a greater share of assurance.

For a time this new married pair seemed to have no other thing in view than pleasure :—Mr. Munden had a numerous acquaintance,—his wife not a few ;—giving and receiving entertainments, as yet engrossed their whole attention ;—each smiling hour brought with it some fresh matter for satisfaction, and all was cheerful, gay, and jocund.

But this was a golden dream, which could not be expected to be of any long continuance :—the gaudy scene vanished at once, and soon a darkening gloom overspread the late enchanting prospect.--Mr. Munden's fortune could not support these constant expences ;--he was obliged to retrench somewhere, and not being of a humour to deny himself any of those amusements he was accustomed to abroad, he became excessively parsimonious at home, inasmuch that the scanty allowance she received from him for housekeeping would scarce furnish out a table fit for a gentleman of an estate far inferior to that he was in possession of, to sit down to himself, much less to ask any friend, who should casually come in to visit him, to partake of.

Nothing

Nothing can be more galling to a woman of any spirit, than to see herself at the head of a family without sufficient means to support her character, as such, in a handsome manner: --the fair subject of this history had too much generosity, and indeed too much pride, in her composition, to endure that there should be any want in so necessary an article of life, and as often as she found occasion, would have recourse for a supply to her own little purse.

But this was a way of going on, which could not last long: -- she complained of it to Mr. Munden; ---but though the remonstrances she made him were couched in the most gentle terms that could be, he could not forbear testifying a good deal of displeasure on hearing them; --he told her, that he feared she was a bad œconomist, and that as she was a wife, she ought to understand, that it was one of the main duties of her place to be frugal of her husband's money; and be content with such things as were suitable to his circumstances.

The surly look with which these words were accompanied, as well as the words themselves, made her easily perceive, that all the mighty passion he had pretended to have had for her, while in his days of courtship, was too weak to enable him to bear the least contradiction from her, now he was become a husband.

She restrained, however, that resentment, which so unexpected a discovery of his temper had inspired her with, from breaking into any violent expressions, and only mildly answered, that she should always be far from desiring any thing, which would be of real prejudice to his circumstances; but added, that she was too well acquainted with his fortune, not to be well assured, it would admit of keeping a table much more agreeable to the rank he held in life, and the figure he made in other things.

‘ I am the best judge of that,’ replied he, a little disdainfully ; ‘ and also, that it is owing to your own want of management, that my table is so ill supplied :——I would wish you therefore to contrive better for the future, as you may depend upon it, that, unless my affairs take a better turn, I shall not be persuaded to make any addition to my domestic expences.’

‘ I could wish then, Sir,’ cried she, with a little more warmth, ‘ that henceforth you would be your own purveyor ; for I confess myself utterly unable to maintain a family, like our’s, on the niggard stipend you have allotted for that purpose.’

‘ No really, Madam,’ answered he, very churlishly, ‘ I did not marry, in order to make myself acquainted with how the markets go, and become learned in the prices of beef and mutton ; —I always looked on that as the province of a wife,——it is enough for me to discharge all reasonable demands on that score ;——and since you provoke me to it, I must tell you, Madam,’ continued he, ‘ that what my table wants of being compleat, is robbed from it by the idle superfluities you women are so fond of, and with which, I think, I ought to have no manner of concern.’

As she was not able to comprehend the meaning of these words, she was extremely astonished at them, and in a pretty hasty manner demanded a detail of those superfluities he accused her of :——on which, throwing himself back in his chair, and looking on her with the most careless and indifferent air he could assume, he replied in these terms :

‘ I know not,’ said he, ‘ what fool it was that first introduced the article of pin-money into marriage-writings, — nothing certainly is more idle, since a woman ought to have nothing apart from her husband ; but as it is grown into a custom, and I have condescended to comply with it, you
‘ should,

‘ should, I think, of your own accord, and without giving me the trouble of reminding you of it, convert some part of it, at least, to such uses as might ease me of a burden I have indeed no kind of reason to be loaded with ; ——as for example,’ continued he, ‘ coffee,—tea,—chocolate,—with all the appendages belonging to them, have no business to be enrolled in the list of house-keeping expences, and consequently not to be taken out of what I allow you for that purpose.’

Here he gave over speaking, but the consternation his wife was in preventing her from making any immediate answer, he resumed his discourse :—— ‘ Since we are upon this topic, my dear,’ said he, ‘ it will be best to tell you at once what I expect from you,——it is but one thing more,——which is this ;——you have a man entirely to yourself, ——I am willing he should eat with the family ; but as to his livery and wages I think it highly reasonable you should be at the charge of.’

The innate rage, which, during the whole time he had been talking, swell’d her breast to almost bursting, would now no longer be confined :—— ‘ Good heavens !’ cried she, ‘ to what have I reduced myself ?——Is this to be a wife ?——Is this the state of wedlock ?——Call it rather an Egyptian bondage ;——the cruel taskmasters of the Israelites could exact no more.——Ungrateful man !’ pursued she, bursting into tears, ‘ is this the love,——the tenderness you vowed ?’

Overwhelmed with passion, she was capable of uttering no more, but continued walking about the room in a disordered motion, and all the tokens of the most outrageous grief and anger :—he sat silent for some time ; but at last looking somewhat more kindly on her than he had done, ‘ Prithee, my dear,’ said he, ‘ don’t let me see you give way to emotions so unbecoming of yourself, and so unjust

‘just to me;---you shall have no occasion to complain of my want of love and tenderness;--- you know what my expectations are, and when once I have gained my point, you may be sure, for my own sake, I shall do every thing suitable to it;---I would only have you behave with a little prudence for the present.’

In concluding these words, he rose and took hold of her hand, but approached her with an air so cold and indifferent, as was far from attoning, with a woman of her penetration, for the unkindness of his late proposal.---‘No, Mr. Munden,’ cried she, haughtily, turning from him, ‘do not imagine I am so weak as to expect, after what you have said, any thing but ill usage.’

I have said nothing that I have cause to repent of;’ answered he, ‘and hope, that when this heat is over, you will do me the justice to think so too. ---I leave you to consider of it, and bring yourself into a better humour against my return.’---He added no more, but took his hat and sword, and went out of the room.

She attempted not to call him back, but retired to her chamber, in order to give loose to passions more turbulent than she had ever known before.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Contains a second matrimonial contest, of worse consequence than the former.

WHOEVER considers Miss Betsy Thoughtless in her maiden character, will not find it difficult to conceive what she now endured in that of Mrs. Munden. --- All that lightened her poor heart,---all that made her patiently submit to the fate her brothers had, in a manner, forced upon her,

her, was her belief of her being passionately beloved by the man she made her husband; — but thus cruelly undeceived, by the treatment she had just met with from him, one may truly say, that if it did not make her utterly hate and despise him, it at least destroyed at once, in her, all the respect and good-will she had; from the first moment of her marriage, been endeavouring to feel for him.

It is hard to say, whether her surprise at an éclaircissement she had so little expected, — her indignation at Mr. Munden's mean attempt to encroach upon her right, — or the shock of reflecting, that it was by death alone she could be relieved from the vexations which she was threatened with from a man of his humour, were most predominant in her soul; but certain it is, that all together racked her with most terrible revolutions.

She was in the midst of these agitations, when lady Trusty came to visit her. — In the distractions of her thoughts she had forgot to give orders to be denied to all company, which otherwise she would, doubtless, have done; even without excepting that dear and justly valued friend.

She endeavoured, as much as possible, to compose herself, and prevent all tokens of discontent from appearing in her countenance, but had not the power of doing it effectually enough, to deceive the penetration of that lady; — she immediately perceived, that something extraordinary had happened to her, and as soon as she was seated began to enquire into the cause of the change she had observed in her.

Mrs. Munden, on considering what was most becoming in a wife, from the first moment of her becoming so, had absolutely resolved always to ad-

here, as strictly as possible, to this maxim of the poet :

- ‘ Secrets of marriage should be sacred held,
 ‘ Their sweets and bitters by the wife conceal’d.’

But finding herself pretty strongly pressed by a lady, to whom she had the greatest and most just reason to believe she ought to have nothing in reserve, she hesitated not long to relate to her the whole story of the *brulée* she had had with her husband.

Lady Trusty was extremely alarmed at the account given her, and because she would be sure not to mistake any part of it, made Mrs. Munden repeat several times over every particular of this unhappy dispute;—then, after a pause of some minutes, began to give her advice to her fair friend in the following terms :

‘ It grieves me to the soul,’ said that excellent lady, ‘ to find there is already any matter of complaint between you ;—you have been two months married, and it is methinks, by much too early for him to throw off the lover, and exert the husband ;—but since it is so, I would not have you, for your sake, too much exert the wife:—I fear he is of a rugged nature,—it behoves you, therefore, rather to endeavour to soften it, by all the means in your power, than to pretend to combat with unequal force ;—you know the engagements you are under, and how little relief all the resistance you can make will be able to afford you.’

‘ Bless me, madam !’ cried Mrs. Munden, spirituously, ‘ would your ladyship have me give up, to the expence of house-keeping, that slender pittance allowed for cloaths and pocket-money in my marriage-articles ?’

‘ No,

‘ No, my dear,’ cried lady Trusty, ‘ far be it from me to give you any such counsel ;---on the contrary, I am apprehensive, that if you should suffer yourself to be either menaced, or cajoled, out of even the smallest part of your rights, ’tis possible that a man of Mr. Munden’s disposition, might hereafter be tempted to encroach upon the whole, and leave you nothing you could call your own.’

‘ It is very difficult, if not wholly impossible,’ continued she, ‘ to judge, with any certainty, how to proceed with a person, whose temper one does not know ;--- I am altogether a stranger to that of Mr. Munden, nor can you as yet pretend to be perfectly acquainted with it ;---all I can say, therefore, is, that I would have you maintain your own privileges, without appearing too tenacious of them.’

‘ I have then no other part to take,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘ than just to lay out in the best manner I can what money he is pleased to allow, without making any addition, what accidents soever may happen to demand it.’

‘ I mean so,’ replied lady Trusty, ‘ and whenever there is any deficiency, as some there must necessarily be, in what might be expected from your way of living, I would not have you seem to take the least notice of it ;---behave, as if entirely unconcerned,---contented, and easy ;--- leave it to him to complain, and when he does so, you will have an opportunity, by shewing the bills of what you have laid out, of proving, that it is not owing to your want of good management, but to the scarcity of the means put into your hands, that his table is so ill supplied ;---but still let every thing you urge on this occasion, be accompanied with all the softness it is in your power to assume.’

To this Mrs. Munden, with a deep sigh, made answer, that though she was an ill dissembler, and besides had little room, from her husband's late carriage towards her, to flatter herself with any good effect of her submission, yet she would endeavour to follow her ladyship's counsel, in making the experiment, however irksome it might be to her to do so.

They had a very long conversation together on this head, during the whole course of which lady Trusty laboured all she could to perswade the other to look on her situation in a much less disagreeable light, than in reality it deserved.

But how little is it in the power of argument to reason away pain! -- one is much more deeply affected with what one feels than what one hears: --- the heart of Mrs. Munden was beset with thorns, which all the words in the world would have been ineffectual to remove; --- disappointed in every thing, that could have rendered this marriage supportable to her; --- her good nature abused, --- her spirit humbled and depressed, — no considerations were of force to moderate her passions, but that melancholy one that as her misfortunes were without a remedy, the best, and indeed the only relief, that fate permitted was, in patiently submitting.

She acted, nevertheless, in every respect for several days, conformable to the method lady Trusty had prescribed, and restrained her temper so, as neither by word or action to give Mr. Munden any just cause of offence; — he also kept himself within bounds, though it was easy for her to perceive, by his sullen deportment, every time he was at table, how ill he was satisfied with the provisions set before him.

A cold civility on the one side, and an enforced complaisance on the other, hindered the mutual discontent that reigned in both their hearts from being

ing perceptible to any who came to visit them, and also from breaking into any indecencies between themselves, 'till one day, a gentleman of some consideration in the world happening, unexpectedly, to come to dine with them, Mr. Munden was extremely shocked at being no better prepared for his entertainment.

'What! my dear,' said he to his wife, 'have you nothing else to give us?'——To which she replied, with a great deal of presence of mind,—
'I am quite ashamed and sorry for the accident,'
'but you know, my dear, we both intended to dine abroad to day, so I gave a bill of fare accordingly, and this gentleman came too late to make any addition to what I had ordered.'

It may be easily supposed the guest assured them, that there needed no apologies,—that every thing was mighty well, and such like words of course; so no more was said upon this subject.

But the pride of Mr. Munden filled him with so much inward rage and spite, that he was scarce able to contain himself till his friend had taken leave, and he no sooner was at liberty to say what he thought proper, without incurring the censure of being unmannerly or unkind, than he began to reproach her in the most unjust and cruel terms, for having, as he said, exposed him to the contempt and ridicule of a person, who had hitherto held him in the highest estimation.

She made no other reply, than that she was no less confounded than himself, at what had happened,—that it was not in her power to prevent it,—that she could wish to be always prepared for the reception of any friend, and that she was certain, when he reflected on the cause, he would be far from laying any blame on her.

In speaking these words, she ran to her cabinet, and as lady Trusty had directed, produced an ac-

count to what uses every single shilling she had received from him had been converted, since the last dispute they had with each other on this score.

In presenting the papers to him, —— ‘Read these bills,’ said she, ‘and be convinced how little I deserve such treatment from you :—— you will find that there are no items inserted of coffee, tea, or chocolate.—— Articles,’ —— continued she, with an air a little disdainfully, —— ‘which you seemed to grumble at, tho’ yourself and friends had the same share in, as well as me and mine.’

‘Rot your accounts,’ cried he, tearing the papers she gave him into a thousand pieces, —— ‘have you the folly to imagine I will be troubled with such stuff? —— It is sufficient I know upon the whole what ought to be done, and must plainly tell you, once for all, that you should rather think of retrenching your expences, than flatter yourself with expecting an increase of my allowance to you.’

‘My expences ! —— my expences !’ reiterated she, with vehemence, —— ‘what does the man mean?’ —— ‘My meaning,’ answered he, sullenly, ‘would need no explanation, if you had either any love for me, or prudence enough to direct you to do what would entitle you to mine ; —— but since you are so ignorant, I must tell you, that I think my family too much encumbered ; —— you have two maids, —— I do not desire you to lessen the number, but they are certainly enough to wait upon you in a morning. —— I have a man, for whom I never have any employment after that time, and he may wait at table, and attend you the whole afternoon ; —— I see therefore no occasion you have to keep a fellow meerly to loiter about the house, —— eat, ——
‘ drink,

‘ drink, and run before your chair when you make
‘ your visits, —— I insist, therefore, that you ei-
‘ ther discharge him, or consent to give him his
‘ livery and wages, and also to allow for his board
‘ out of your own annual revenue of pin-money.’

What usage was this for a young lady, scarce yet three months married, —endued with every qualification to create love and esteem, —accustomed to receive nothing but testimonies of admiration from as many as beheld her, and addressed with the extremest homage and tenderness, by the very man who now seemed to take pride in the power he had obtained of thwarting her humour, and dejecting that spirit and vivacity he had so lately pretended to adore.

How utterly impossible was it for her now to observe the rules laid down to her by lady Trusty! —— Could she after this submit to put in practice any softening arts she had been advised to win her lordly tyrant into temper? —— Could she, I say, have done this, without being guilty of a meanness, which all wives must have condemned her for.

But though the answers she gave to the proposal made her by this ungenerous husband were such as convinced him, she would never be prevailed upon to recede from any part of what was her due by contract, and though she testified her resentment, on his attempting such a thing, in terms haughty enough, yet did she confine herself within the limits of decency, not uttering a single word unbecoming of her character, either as the woman of good understanding, or the wife.

Mr. Munden’s notions of marriage had always been extremely unfavourable to the ladies; —— he considered a wife no more than an upper servant, bound to study and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom she had given her hand; —and how obsequious and submissive soever he appeared when
a lover,

a lover, had fixed his resolution, to render himself absolute master when he became a husband.

On finding himself thus disappointed in his aim, he was almost ready to burst with an inward malice, which not daring to wreak, as perhaps at that time he could have wished, he vented in an action mean and pitiful indeed, but not to be wondered at in a man possessed of so small a share of affection, justice, or good-nature.

The reader may remember, that Mr. Truworth, in the beginning of his courtship to Miss Betsy, had made her a present of a squirrel ; — she had still retained this first token of love, and always cherished it with an uncommon care ; — the little creature was sitting on the ridge of its cell cracking nuts, which his indulgent mistress had bestowed upon him ; — the fondness she had always shewn of him put a sudden thought into Mr. Munden's head, he started from his chair, saying to his wife, with a revengeful sneer, — ‘ Here is one domestic, at least, that may be spared.’ — With these words he flew to the poor harmless animal, seized it by the neck, and throwing it with his whole force against the carved work of the marble chimney, its tender frame was dashed to pieces.

All this was done in such an instant, that Mrs. Munden had not time to make any attempt for preventing it, but on the sight of so disastrous a fate befalling her little favourite, and the brutality of him who inflicted it, raised emotions in her, which she neither endeavoured, nor at that instant could have power to quell.

‘ Monster ! ’ — cried she ; — ‘ unworthy the name of man ; — you needed not have been guilty of this low piece of cruelty, to make me see to what a wretch I am sacrificed.’ — ‘ Nor was there any occasion for exclamations such as these,’

‘these,’ replied he, scornfully, ‘to make me know that I was married to a termagant.’

Many altercations of the like nature passed between them, to which Mrs. Munden was the first that put a period : — finding herself unable to restrain her tears, and unwilling he should be witness of that weakness in her, she flew out of the room, saying at the same time, that she would never eat, or sleep with him again.

C H A P. XXIX.

Gives an exact account of what happened in the family of Mr. Munden, after the lamentable and deplorable death of his lady's favourite squirrel, with several other particulars, much less significant, yet very necessary to be told.

IF Mr. Munden had set his whole invention to work, in order to find the means of rendering himself hateful in the eyes of his wife, he could not have done it more effectually, than by his savage treatment of her beloved squirrel ; — many circumstances indeed, concurred to set this action of his in the most odious light that could possibly be given it.

In the first place, the massacre of so unhurtful a little creature, who never did any thing to provoke its fate, had something in it strangely spleenatic and barbarous.

In the next, the bloody and inhuman deed being perpetrated by this injurious husband, merely in opposition to his wife, and because he knew it would give her some sort of affliction, was sufficient to convince her; that he took pleasure in giving pain to her, and also made her not doubt, but he would stop at nothing for that purpose, provided it were safe, and came within the letter of the law.

It grieved her to be deprived of a little animal she so long had kept,——with whose pretty tricks she had so often been diverted; and it must be confessed, that to be deprived of so innocent a satisfaction, by the very man she had looked upon as bound by all manner of ties to do every thing to please her, was enough to give the most galling reflections to a woman of her delicacy and spirit.

But there was still another, and by many degrees a more aggravating motive for her indignation;—if she had purchased this squirrel with her own money, or if it had been presented to her by any other hands than those of Mr. Trueworth, not only the loss would have been less shocking to her, but also the person, by whom she sustained that loss, would, perhaps, have found less difficulty in obtaining her forgiveness.

She kept her promise, however, and ordered a bed to be made ready for her in another room:—Mr Munden came not home that night, 'till very late; and being told what his wife had done took not the least notice of it, but happening to meet her the next morning, as she was coming down stairs, ‘So, madam,’ said he, ‘I suppose you fancy this obstinate disobedience to your husband is mighty becoming in you.’

‘When a husband,’ answered she, ‘is ignorant of the regard he ought to have for his wife, or forgets to put it in practice, he can expect neither affection nor obedience, unless the woman he has married happens to be an idiot.’

They passed each other with these words, and she went directly to lady Trusty, being impatient to acquaint her with the behaviour of her husband towards her since she last had seen her.

This worthy lady was astonished beyond measure at the recital;——it seemed so strange to her, that a gentleman of Mr. Munden's birth, fortune, and education,

education, should ever entertain the sordid design of obliging his wife, to convert to the family uses, what had been settled on her for her own private expences, that she could not have given credit to it from any other mouth than that of the weeping sufferer :——his killing of the squirrel also, though a trifle in itself, she could not help thinking denoted a most cruel, revengeful, and mean mind.

But how much soever she condemned him in her heart, she forbore expressing the whole of her sentiments on this occasion to his wife, being willing, as they were joined to each other, by the most sacred and indissoluble bonds, rather to heal, if possible, the breach between them, than to add any thing which might serve to widen it.

She told her, that though she could not but confess, that Mr. Munden had behaved towards her, through this whole affair, in a manner very different from what he ought to have done, or what might have been expected from him, yet she was sorry to find, that she had carried things to that extremity, particularly she blamed her for having quitted his bed ;——‘ because,’ said she, ‘ it may furnish him with some matter of complaint against you, and likewise make others suspect you have not that affection for him, which is the duty of a wife.’

Mrs. Munden making no answer to this, and looking a little perplexed,——‘ I do not mean, by what I have said,’ resumed lady Trusty, ‘ to persuade you to make any mean steps towards a reconciliation :——that is, I would not have you confess you have been in the wrong, or tell him you are sorry for what you have done :——that would be taking a blame upon yourself you do not deserve, and he would imagine he had a right to expect the same on every trifling occasion.——It may be, he might be imperious and ill-natured enough

‘ enough to create quarrels, merely for the sake of
 ‘ humbling your spirit and resentment into submis-
 ‘ sions.’

‘ But as to live in the manner you are likely to
 ‘ do together,’ continued she, ‘ cannot but be very
 ‘ displeasing in the eye of heaven, and must also ex-
 ‘ pose both of you to the censure and contempt of
 ‘ the world, when once it comes to be known and
 ‘ talked of ; some means must be speedily found to
 ‘ bring about an accommodation between you.’

‘ O ! madam,’ cried the other, hastily interrupt-
 ing her, ‘ how impossible it is for me ever to look
 ‘ with any thing but disdain and resentment, on a
 ‘ man, who after so many protestations of eternal
 ‘ love, eternal adoration, has dared to treat me in this
 ‘ manner!--No,’ added she, with greater vehemence
 than before, ‘ I despise the low, — the groveling
 ‘ mind ;—light and darkness are not more opposites
 ‘ than we are, and can as easily agree.’

‘ You must not think, nor talk in this fashion,’
 said the good lady :—‘ all you can accuse him
 ‘ of will not amount to a separation ; — besides,
 ‘ consider how odd a figure a woman makes, who
 ‘ lives apart from her husband :—there is an abso-
 ‘ lute necessity for a reconciliation, and as it is pro-
 ‘ bable, that neither of you will pursue any mea-
 ‘ sures for that purpose, it is highly proper your
 ‘ friends would take upon them to interpose in the
 ‘ affair.’

It was a considerable time before Mrs. Munden
 could be persuaded, by all the arguments lady
 Trusty made use of, that either her duty, her in-
 terest, or her reputation, required she should for-
 give the insults she had received, from this ungrate-
 ful and unworthy husband.

The good lady would not, however, give over
 till she had prevailed on her not only to listen to her
 reasons, but also to be at last perfectly convinced

by them :—this point being gained, the manner in which the matter should be conducted, was the next thing that employed her thoughts.

It seemed best to her, that the two Mr. Thoughtlesses should not be made acquainted with any part of what had passed, if the business she so much wished to see accomplished could be effected without their knowledge ;—her reason for it was this :—they were both men of pretty warm dispositions, especially the younger, and as they had been so assiduous in promoting this match, so early a breach, and the provocations given for it by Mr. Munden, might occasion them to shew their resentment for his behaviour in a fashion, which would make what was already very bad, much worse.

‘ Sir Ralph is a man in years,’ said she, — ‘ has been your guardian, and I am apt to believe, that on both these accounts his words will have some weight with Mr. Munden :—the friendship which he knows is between us, will also give me the privilege of adding something in my turn ; and I hope by our joint mediation this quarrel may be made up, so far at least as that you may live civilly together.’

Mrs. Munden made no other reply to what her ladyship had said, than to thank her for the interest she took in her affairs, and the trouble she was about to give Sir Ralph on her account.

The truth is, this young lady would in her heart have been much better satisfied, that there had been a possibility of being separated for ever, from a person, who, she was now convinced, had neither love nor esteem for her, rather than to have consented to cohabit with him as a wife, even though he should be prevailed upon to request it, in the most seemingly submissive terms.

While they were in this conversation a message came from Mr. Edward Goodman, containing an

invitation to Sir Ralph and lady Trusty, to an entertainment that gentleman had ordered to be prepared the next day for several of his friends, on a particular occasion, which, because the reader as yet is wholly ignorant of, it is highly proper he should be made acquainted with.

CHAP. XXX.

Presents the reader with some passages, which could not conveniently be told before, and without all doubt have been for a long time impatiently expected.

THE spirits of lady Mellafin had for several months been kept up by the wicked agents she had employed in the management of the worst cause, that ever was taken in hand:—those subtle and most infamous wretches, in order to draw fresh supplies of money from that unhappy woman, had still found means to elude and baffle all the endeavours of Mr. Goodman's honest lawyer, to bring the matter to a fair trial.

But at last all their diabolical inventions,—their evasions,—their subterfuges failing, and the day appointed, which they knew must infallibly bring the whole dark mystery of iniquity to light, when all their perjuries must be explored, and themselves exposed to the just punishment of such flagitious crimes, not one of them had courage to stand the dreadful test, nor face that awful tribunal they had so greatly abused.

Yet so cruel were they, even to the very woman, all the remains of whose shattered fortune they had shared among them, as not to give her the least warning of her fate.—Nor till the morning, which she was made to hope would decide every thing

thing in her favour, did she know she was undone, deserted, and left alone to bear the brunt of all the offended laws inflict on forgery.

What words can represent the horror,——the confusion of her guilty mind, when neither the person who drew up the pretended will, nor either of those two who had set their names as witnesses appearing, she sent in search of them, and found they were all removed from their habitations, and fled, no one could inform her where.

Scarce had she time to make her escape out of the court, before word was given to an officer to take her into custody ;——not daring to go home, nor knowing to whom she could have recourse for shelter in this exigence, she ran like one distracted through the streets, 'till she came to one of the gates of St. James's park, where meeting with a porter, she sent him to her lodgings, to order her daughter Flora, and Mrs. Prinks, to come that instant to her.

Mrs. Prinks immediately obeyed the summons, but Miss Flora had the audacity to desire to be excused, being then dressing to go on a business, which indeed she then imagined was of much more consequence to herself than any thing relating to her mother could possibly be.

After this dissolute and unfortunate creature was left by Mr. Truworth, in the manner described in the third volume of this history, she gave a loose to agonies, which only those who have felt the same can be capable of conceiving.

Her shrieks, and the request Mr. Truworth had made on his going out, brought up the woman of the house herself, to administer what relief was in her power, to a lady who seemed to stand in so much need of it.

Having prevailed on her to come down stairs, she seated her in a little room behind the bar, and as she saw the violence of her passions threw her into fre-

quent faintings, neglected nothing which she thought might be of service to recover her spirits, and compose her mind.

As she was thus charitably employed, a young gentleman, who used the house, and was very free with all belonging to it, happened to come in:—Miss Flora, besides being handsome, had something extremely agreeable and engaging in her air, and had her heart been possessed of half that innocence her countenance gave the promise of, her character would have been as amiable as it was now the contrary.

There are some eyes which shine thro' their tears, and are lovely in the midst of anguish:—those of Miss Flora had this advantage, and she appeared, in spite of her disorder, so perfectly charming to the stranger, that he could not quit the place without joining his endeavours to those of the good natur'd hostess for her consolation, and had the satisfaction to find them much more effectual for that purpose.

The afflicted fair one finding herself somewhat better, thanked the good woman in the politest terms for the pains she had been at; but the gentleman would not be denied seeing her safe home in a coach, saying, the air on a sudden might have too violent an effect on her so lately recovered spirits, and that it was not fit she should be alone in case of accidents.

Miss Flora was easily prevailed upon to accept this obliging offer;—he attended her home, —stayed about half an hour with her, and entreated she would give him permission to come the next day, and enquire after her health.

She knew the world too well, and the disposition of mankind in general, not to see that there was something more than mere compassion in the civilities he had shewn to her;—she examined his person,---his behaviour, and found nothing in either that was not perfectly agreeable; and though she had

had really loved Mr. Truworth to the greatest excess that woman could do, yet, as she knew he was irrecoverably lost, she looked upon a new attachment as the only sure means of putting the past out of her head.

A very few visits served to make an eclairsissement of the thoughts they mutually had entertained of each other, and as he had found by the woman of the tavern, that the distress of this young lady had been occasioned by a love quarrel with a gentleman, who had brought her into that house, he began with expressing the utmost abhorrence of that injustice and ingratitude, which some were capable of; --- ‘but,’ said he, ‘if some of us have neither love nor honour for those that love us, we all certainly love our own happiness, and he must be stupid and insensible, indeed,’ added he, embracing her with the warmest transport, ‘who could not find it eternally within these arms.’

‘You all talk so,’ answered she, with the most engaging smile she could put on; --- ‘but as my youth,---innocence,---and, perhaps, a little mixture of female vanity have once misled me, it behoves me to be extremely cautious how the tender impulse gets a second time possession of my heart.’

In fine, she put him not to a too great expence of vows and protestations before she either was, or pretended to be convinced of the sincerity of his passion, and also rewarded it in as ample a manner as his soul could wish.

It is certain, that for a time, this new gallant behaved with the extremest fondness towards her,---did every thing that the most ardent lover could do to please her,---he treated her,---carried her to all public places of entertainment, and what in her present circumstances was most necessary to her, was

continually making her very rich and valuable presents.

But it could not be expected, that an amour entered into in this manner, and which had no solid esteem on either side for its foundation, would be of any long continuance :---the gentleman had a great deal of good nature, but was gay and inconstant, as the most variable of his sex ;---he found a new charm in every new face that presented itself to him, ---and as he wanted no requisites to please the fair, he too seldom failed in his intents upon them.

Miss Flora was not ignorant, that he had many amusements of this kind, even while he kept up the most tender correspondence with her ; but perceiving that both reproaches and complaints were equally in vain with a man of his humour, she had the cunning to forbear persecuting him with either, and by appearing always easy, degagée, and unconcerned, preserved her acquaintance with him, and received proofs of his liberality long after she had lost those of his inclination.

On being told, that he was going on a party of pleasure into the south of France, she exercised all her wit and artifice to engage him to permit her to be one of the company ; but he treated this request as a mere bagatelle,---said the thing was utterly impracticable,---that none of the gentlemen took any ladies with them,---so he would not have her think of it.

It was in order to take her leave of him, before his departure, that she was going to his lodgings when lady Mellasin had sent for her into the park.

The cool reception he had given her sent her home in a very ill humour, which was greatly heightened by a letter, which she found Mrs. Prinks had left for her on the table.

That woman having joined her lady in the park, and consulted together what was to be done, they
took

took a hackney coach, and drove to an obscure part of the town, where they hired lodgings in a feigned name, after which Mrs. Prinks hurried home,---packed up what cloaths, and other necessaries she thought would be immediately wanted, and after having wrote a short account to Miss Flora of the misfortune that had happened, and given her directions where to come, returned with all haste to her disconsolate lady.

C H A P. XXXI.

Contains the catastrophe of lady Mellasin's and her daughter Flora's adventures, while on this side the globe.

WHILE this unhappy little family were in their concealment, each of them set her whole wits to work to find some means, by which lady Mellasin might be extricated from that terrible dilemma she had brought herself into.

But as this was a thing in its very nature, as affairs had been managed, morally impossible to be accomplished, all their endeavours for that purpose only served to shew them the extreme vanity of the attempt, and consequently to render them more miserable.

Despair at length, and the near prospect of approaching want, so humbled the once haughty spirit of lady Mellasin, that she resolved on writing to Mr. Edward Goodman,—to make use of all her rhetoric to sooth him into forgiveness for the troubles she had occasioned him, and in fine to petition relief from the very man, whom she had made use of the most villainous arts to prejudice.

The

The contents of her letter to that much injured gentleman were as follow :

TO EDWARD GOODMAN, Esq;

SIR,

‘ **A** Ppearances are so much against me, that I
 ‘ scarce dare say I am innocent, though I
 ‘ know myself so, as to any intention of doing you
 ‘ injustice :—I cannot, however, forbear giving you
 ‘ a short sketch of the imposition which has been
 ‘ practised upon me, and in my name attempted to
 ‘ be put on you.

‘ The will, which has occasioned this long con-
 ‘ test between us, was brought me by a person,
 ‘ who told me, he had drawn it up exactly accord-
 ‘ ing to my late husband’s instructions, the very
 ‘ evening before he died ;——the subscribing wit-
 ‘ nesses gave me the same assurance, and also added,
 ‘ that Mr. Goodman was so well convinced of my
 ‘ integrity, and the wrong he had done me by
 ‘ suspecting it, that had he lived only to the next
 ‘ morning, he had resolved to send for me home,
 ‘ and be reconciled to me in the face of the world ;
 ‘ ——so that if the thing was a piece of forgery,
 ‘ these men are only guilty,——I am entirely free
 ‘ from any share in it.

‘ But as these proceedings, which I have unhappi-
 ‘ ly been prevailed upon to countenance, have gi-
 ‘ ven you a great deal of trouble and expence, I sin-
 ‘ cerely ask your pardon for it :—this is all the at-
 ‘ tonement I can make to heaven for offences more
 ‘ immediately my own.

‘ I am very sensible, notwithstanding, that by what
 ‘ I have done, I have not only forfeited my claim
 ‘ to such part of the effects of Mr. Goodman as
 ‘ appertain to the widow of an eminent and wealthy
 ‘ citizen, but likewise all my pretensions to the
 ‘ friendship

‘ friendship and favour of the person he has made
‘ his heir ; — yet, Sir, however guilty I may seem
‘ to you, or how great my faults in reality may have
‘ been, I cannot help being of opinion, that when
‘ you remember I was once the wife of an uncle,
‘ whose memory you have so much cause to value,
‘ you will think the name and character I have borne
‘ ought to defend me from public infamy, parish
‘ alms, and beggary.

‘ Reduced as I am, it would ill become me to
‘ make any stipulations, or lay a tax on the good-
‘ ness I am necessitated to implore. — No, Sir ; as I
‘ can now demand nothing, so also I can hope for
‘ nothing but from your compassion and generosity,
‘ and to these two amiable qualities alone shall as-
‘ cribe whatever provision you shall think fit to
‘ make for me, out of that abundance I was once
‘ in full possession of.

‘ I shall add no more, than to intreat you will
‘ consider, with some portion of attention and good-
‘ nature, on what I have lately been, and what I
‘ at present am,

‘ The most unfortunate,

And most forlorn of womankind,

‘ M. MELLASIN GOODMAN.

‘ P. S. My daughter Flora, the innocent partaker
‘ of my griefs and sufferings, will have the ho-
‘ nour to deliver this to you, and, I hope, return
‘ with a favourable answer.’

Lady Mellasin chose to send Miss Flora with this letter, as believing her agreeable person and manner of behaviour would have a greater effect on the youthful heart of the person it was addressed to, than could have been expected from the formal and affected gravity of Mrs. Prinks.

Lady

It is not unlikely too, but that she might flatter herself with the hopes of greater advantages, by her daughter's going in person to Mr. Goodman's, than those, which her letter had petitioned for :— she had often heard, and read, of men, whose resentment had been softened and melted into tenderness, on the appearance of a lovely object :—as the poet somewhere or other expresses it,

‘ Beauty, like ice, our footing does betray ;

‘ Who can tread sure on the smooth slipp’ry
‘ way ? ’

Miss Flora herself was also very far from being displeased at going on this errand, and as it was not proper for her to dress in the manner she would have done, on making a visit to any other person, it cost her some time before her setting out, to equip herself in such a deshabillee, as she thought would be most genteel and become her best.

She had the good fortune to find Mr. Goodman at home, and was immediately introduced to him ; ——— he was a little surpris'd at a visit made him by a young lady, whom he had never seen before, but not enough to prevent him from receiving her with the utmost complaisance ; ——— he saluted her, ——— seated her in a chair, and then asked, what commands she had to favour him with : ——— on which taking out a letter, and giving it to him ; ——— ‘ This, Sir, said she, with a deep sigh, ‘ will inform you of the request that brings me ‘ here.’

Mr. Goodman read it hastily over ; but while he was doing so, could not forbear shaking his head several times, but spoke nothing, ’till after a pause of some minutes, ‘ Madam,’ said he, ‘ as ‘ this is a business, which I could not expect to ‘ have heard of, I must confess myself altogether ‘ unprepared how to proceed in it.—If lady Mella-
‘ fin,’

‘sin,’ added he, ‘will give herself the trouble to send in three or four days, she may depend on an answer from me.’

The coldness of these words, and the distant air he assumed while speaking them, so widely different from that with which he had accosted this lady on her first entrance, made her presently see, she had nothing to hope from this embassy, on her own account, and made her also tremble for that of her mother.

As he urged her not to stay, nor even gave the least hint, that he was desirous of her doing so, she rose, and with a most dejected air took her leave, telling him, in going out, that she should not fail of acquainting lady Mellasin with his commands, who, she doubted not, would be punctual in obeying them.

Mr. Goodman was, indeed, too well acquainted with the character of Miss Flora to be capable of receiving any impression from the charms nature had bestowed upon her, even though they had been a thousand times more brilliant, than in effect they were, and she had not been the daughter of a woman, who had rendered herself so justly hateful to him.

Lady Mellasin was shocked to the very soul, at being told the reception her daughter had met with, and could not help looking upon it as a very bad omen of her future success;—she doubted not but by his saying, that he must have time for deliberation, he meant, that he would do nothing in this point without having first consulted his friends, and she had no reason to expect, that any of these he conversed with would give council in her favour.

To be reduced from a state of opulence and respect, to one of poverty, contempt, and wretchedness, is terrible indeed; but much more so, when accompanied

accompanied with a consciousness of having deserved by our vices, and ill conduct, all the misfortunes we complain of.

Lady Mellafin having no pleasing reflection of having done her duty in any one point in life, it would not have been strange, that thus destitute of all comfort from within, all succour from without, if she had yielded herself to the last despair.

She, nevertheless, amidst all the distraction of her thoughts, still continued to testify a resolution, seldom to be found among women of her abandoned principles, never departing from this maxim, that in the worst of events nothing was to be neglected : — on the third day she sent Mrs. Prinks, to wait on Mr. Goodman for his answer, having experienced the little effect her daughter's presence had produced.

It is a thing well worth the observation of all degrees of people, that the truly generous never keep long in suspense the persons they think proper objects of their bounty. — A favour that costs too much pains in obtaining, loses great part of its value ; — it palls upon the mind of the receiver, and looks more like being extorted than bestowed.

Mr. Cowley, though a man, whose great merit one would think should have set him above the necessity of making any request of a pecuniary nature, was certainly obliged sometimes to solicitations that were very uneasy to him, and drew from him this emphatic exclamation,

‘ If there’s a man, ye gods, I ought to hate,
‘ Attendance and dependance be his fate.’

It soon occurred to Mr. Goodman in what manner it would best become him to act towards this unhappy woman, and also what conditions ought to be stipulated on her part ; he had been told,

both

both by the lawyer, and the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, that it was his late uncle's intention, that she should not be left without a decent provision, and being willing to conform, as much as possible, to all the desires of a person, whom he had always esteemed as a parent, he passed by the injury which since his death she had attempted to do to himself, and within the time he had mentioned to Miss Flora, wrote an answer to her request, in the following terms :

To lady MELLASIN GOODMAN.

MADAM,

‘ **T**HOUGH you cannot but be sensible, that
 ‘ your late base attempt to invalidate my dear
 ‘ uncle's will, excludes you from receiving any be-
 ‘ nefit from it, yet as I am determined, as far as
 ‘ in my power, to make the example of that ex-
 ‘ cellent man the rule of all my actions, I shall not
 ‘ carry my resentment for the injustice you have
 ‘ done me, beyond what he expressed for those
 ‘ much greater injuries he sustained, by your in-
 ‘ fidelity and ingratitude : --- it was not his inten-
 ‘ tion you should starve, nor is it my desire you
 ‘ should do so.

‘ I am willing, madam, to allow you a pension
 ‘ of one hundred pounds per Ann. to be quarterly
 ‘ paid into whose hands soever you shall think fit
 ‘ to appoint for that purpose ; --- but it must be on
 ‘ condition, that you retire forthwith, and pass the
 ‘ whole remainder of your days in some remote
 ‘ part of the kingdom : --- the farther you re-
 ‘ move from a town, where your ill conduct has
 ‘ rendered you so obnoxious, the better.

‘ This, madam, is what I insist upon, and is
 ‘ indeed no more than what your own safety de-
 ‘ mands from you : --- a very strict & reasonable

‘ ing after your accomplices, and if they, or any
 ‘ of them, shall happen to be found, it will be
 ‘ in vain for you to flatter yourself with escaping
 ‘ that punishment, which the offended laws in-
 ‘ flict on crimes of this nature ;——nor would
 ‘ it be in my power to shield you from that fate,
 ‘ which even the meanest and most abject of those
 ‘ concerned with you must suffer.

‘ As I should be extremely sorry to see this, I
 ‘ beg you, for your own sake, to be speedy in your
 ‘ resolution, which, as soon as you inform me of,
 ‘ I shall act accordingly.---I am,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ E. GOODMAN.’

This he ordered to be delivered to any one, who should say they came from lady Mellasin, and Mrs. Prinks accordingly received it. -

Lady Mellasin, in the miserable circumstances to which she had reduced herself, was transported to find she should not be entirely left without support :——as for her being obliged to quit London, she was not in the least shocked at it, as there was no possibility for her ever to appear publicly in it, and she was rather desirous than averse to be out of a place, which could no longer afford her those pleasures and amusements, she had once so much indulged herself in the enjoyment of.

But when she considered on her banishment, and ran over in her mind, what part of England she should make choice of for her asylum, the whole kingdom appeared a desert to her, when driven from the gaieties of the court and capital ; —— she, therefore, resolved to go farther, and enter into a new scene of life, which might be more likely to obliterate the memory of the former ;—— she had heard much talk of Jamaica, —— that it was a rich and opulent place,—— that the inhabi-
 tants

tants thought of little else, but how to divert themselves in the best manner the country afforded ; and that they were not too strict in their notions, either as to honour or religion ;——that reputation was a thing little regarded among them ;——so that in case the occasion which had brought her thither should happen to be discovered, she would not find herself in the less estimation.

She therefore hesitated not to write a second letter to Mr. Goodman, acquainting him with her desire of going to that plantation, and hinting to him, that, as it would be giving him too great a trouble to remit the quarterly payments he mentioned, she should take it as a particular favour, if he would be pleased to bestow on her such a sum as he should think proper, in lieu of the annuity he had offered.

Mr. Goodman was extremely pleased with this proposal, and several letters having passed between them, concerning the conditions, he agreed to give her two hundred pounds in specie, to provide herself with sufficient necessaries for the voyage, and eight hundred more to be deposited in the hands of the captain of the ship, to be paid her on her arrival, with which she appeared very well satisfied, and gave him the most solemn assurances never to trouble him again.

But Miss Flora was all distraction at this event : ——the thoughts of leaving dear London were equally irksome to her with those of death itself : ——fain would she have stayed behind ; but what could she do ? ——without reputation, ——without friends, without money, ——there was no remedy but to share her mother's fortune ; ——Mrs. Prinks also who, by living so long with lady Mellasin, ——known to be in all her secrets, and agent in her iniquitous proceedings, could have no character to recommend her to any other service, continued with

the only person ~~she~~, indeed, was fit to live with, and they all embarked together on board a ship that was then ready to sail.

All Mr. Goodman's friends congratulated him on the service he had done his country, in ridding it of three persons, who, by perverting the talents heaven had bestowed upon them to the most vile purposes, were capable of doing the greatest mischiefs to the more innocent and unwary. It was on this occasion, that he made the invitation before-mentioned.

C H A P. XXXII.

Returns to the Affairs of Mrs. Munden.

THERE were present at the entertainment made by Mr. Goodman, several other of his friends, besides Sir Ralph and lady Trusty,——the two Mr. Thoughtless, and Mrs. Munden :——the husband of that lady had also received an invitation to be one of the guests, but he pretended a previous engagement would not permit him to accept the favour intended him.

He made his excuse, however, in terms so polite, and seemingly sincere, that none of the company, excepting those, who were in the secret of the disagreement between him and his wife, had any apprehensions that his absence was occasioned by any other motive, than what his message had expressed.

Sir Ralph Trusty and his lady, who were the only persons who had the least suspicion of the truth of this affair, could not help being a good deal concerned at it ; but they forbore taking any notice till the latter, perceiving Mrs. Munden had retired to a window at the further end of the room, in
order

order to give herself a little air, stepped hastily towards her, and in a low voice accosted her in these terms :

‘ I see plainly, my dear,’ said she, ‘ through the
 ‘ excuse your husband has made for not complying with Mr. Goodman’s invitation, and am heartily sorry to find this fresh proof of the disunion
 ‘ between you ;—it is high time something should
 ‘ be attempted to put things on a better footing,
 ‘ —I will desire Sir Ralph to send for Mr. Munden to-morrow, and we will try what can be
 ‘ done.’

‘ Your ladyship is extremely good,’ replied the other, ‘ and I shall be always ready to submit to
 ‘ whatever you shall think proper for me ;—but
 ‘ I am determined to be entirely passive in this affair, and shall continue to live with Mr. Munden in the same manner I do at present, till a very great alteration in his behaviour shall oblige me
 ‘ to think I ought, in gratitude, to make some
 ‘ change in mine.’

Lady Trusty would not prolong the conversation for fear of being observed, and they both rejoined the company.—After this there passed nothing of sufficient moment to acquaint the reader with, so I shall only say, that after a day, and great part of the ensuing night spent in feasting, merriment, and all that could exhilarate the spirits, and excite good humour, every one retired to their respective dwellings, highly satisfied with the manner in which they had been entertained by the young merchant.

Lady Trusty was far from being forgetful of the promise she had made to her fair friend, and after a serious consultation with Sir Ralph, in what manner it was most proper to proceed, prevailed upon that gentleman, who was little less zealous than her-

self in doing good offices, to write the following billet to Mr. Munden :

TO GEORGE MUNDEN, Esq;

‘ SIR,

‘ **A** Business, which I am perfectly well assured
 ‘ is of the utmost consequence both to your
 ‘ present and future happiness, obliges me to intreat
 ‘ the favour of seeing you this morning at my house,
 ‘ it not being so proper, for reasons I shall hereaf-
 ‘ ter inform you of, for me to wait on you at
 ‘ your’s.

‘ As I have no other interest in what I have to
 ‘ impart, than merely the pleasure I shall take in
 ‘ doing you a service, and discharging what I think
 ‘ the duty of every honest man, I flatter myself
 ‘ you will not fail of complying immediately with
 ‘ my request, and, at the same time, believe me
 ‘ to be, what I am,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

SIR,

‘ Your well wisher,

‘ And most humble,

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ RALPH TRUSTY.’

This letter being sent pretty early in the morning, Mr. Munden was but just out of bed when he received it :—a breakfast much less pleasing to him than his chocolate ; — he doubted not but his wife had made lady Trusty acquainted with the whole secret of his family affairs, and therefore easily guessed on what score he was sent for in this pressing manner by Sir Ralph ; and as it was highly disagreeable to him to enter into any discussions on that head, it was some time before he could resolve within himself what answer he should send.

But

But whatever deficiencies there might be in this gentleman, none, excepting those of his own family, to whom he did not think it worth his while to be complaisant, could ever accuse him of want of politeness.—A character so dear to him, that, perhaps, he would not have forfeited it, even for the attainment of any other of the more shining and valuable virtues of his sex.

Perplexing, therefore, as he knew this interview must necessarily be to him, he could not think of behaving in an uncourtly manner to a gentleman of Sir Ralph Trusty's rank and fortune; and having ordered that the servant, who brought the letter, should come up, desired him, in the most affable terms, to acquaint his master, that nothing should deprive him of the honour of attending him the moment he was dressed.

Sir Ralph Trusty in his younger years had lived very much in London,—had kept the best company in it, and though he was perfectly sincere in his nature, and had a thorough contempt for all those idle superfluous ceremonies, which some people look upon as the height of good breeding, and value themselves so much upon, yet he knew how to put them in practice whenever he found they would facilitate any point he had to gain; and as Mr. Munden was altogether the courtier in his behaviour, he thought it best to address him in his own way, and receive him rather in a manner as if he was about to praise him for some laudable action he had done, than make any remonstrances to him, on a conduct, which he wanted to convince him required some amendment.

After having said a great many obliging things to him, in order to bring him into a humour proper for his purpose, the politic old baronet began in these terms to open the business, on which he had desired to speak with him.

‘ I have

‘ I have not words to make you sensible,’ continued he, ‘ how much your absence was regretted yesterday by all the company at Mr. Goodman’s, especially by the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, who, indeed, on all occasions, express the highest esteem and regard for you, both as a friend and brother ; but I was more particularly affected, when, on coming home, my wife acquainted me with what she imagined the real cause that deprived us of you.

‘ She told me,’ added he, ‘ that, having the other day surpris’d Mrs. Munden in tears and great confusion, she would not leave her till she wrested from her a secret, which I am equally ashamed and sorry to repeat, but which you can be at no loss to guess at.’

Though Mr. Munden had foreseen on what account he was sent for, and had prepared himself for it, yet he could not forbear testifying some confusion ; but recovering himself from it as soon as he could,—— ‘ Yes, Sir Ralph, I easily perceive,’ answered he, ‘ that my wife has been making some complaints against me to your lady, which, doubtless, have laid me under her displeasure, as I know the accuser has the advantage of the accused, in the opinion of those to whom they appeal.’

‘ Not at all,’ cried Sir Ralph, hastily, ‘ I dare answer, that my wife is no less concerned for your sake, than for that of Mrs. Munden, at the unfortunate disagreement that has happened between you.’

As he was speaking these words, lady Trusty, either by design or accident, pass’d by the door of the room where they were sitting. — ‘ Come in,’ my dear,’ said Sir Ralph to her, ‘ and justify yourself from being sway’d against right reason, by any partial affection to your fair friend.’

‘ If you mean in the case of Mrs. Munden, as I suppose you do,’ replied she, ‘ I can acquit myself with very great ease from any imputation on that score, and am ready even before her husband to give it as my judgment, that in all disputes between persons, who are married to each other, especially when carried to any height, neither of them are wholly faultless; for, though one may be the first aggressor, the other seldom, if ever, behaves so as not to incur some part of the blame.

‘ Your ladyship is all goodness,’ said Mr. Munden, very respectfully, ‘ and in what you have said, discover not only a penetration, but also a love of justice, which can never be too much admired and applauded.—What your ladyship has observed between me and Mrs. Munden, is exactly the thing;—it is certain, that both of us have been to blame:—I have, perhaps, acted in a manner somewhat too abruptly towards her, and she in one too resentful, and too imperious towards me; and though I am willing to allow my dear Betsy all the merit of those good qualities she is possessed of, yet I cannot help giving her some part of the character Mr. Congreve ascribes to Zara in his *Mourning Bride*, and saying,

“ That she has passion, which outstrip the
“ winds,

“ And root her reason up.’

Lady Trusty, who, for the sake of Mrs. Munden’s reputation, was so eager to patch up a reconciliation at any rate between her and her husband, would not seem to defend her behaviour as a wife, while she gently accused him of having too far exerted the authority of a husband.

In a word, both Sir Ralph, and his lady, managed in so artful a manner, still blending cajolings with

with remonstrances, that when they came to enter into a discussion on this affair, that Mr. Munden, whatever he thought in his heart, could not forbear seeming to yield to the justice of their reasonings.'

He consented, though not without some scruples, and a much greater share of inward reluctance, than his complaisance would permit him to make shew of, to add one guinea per week to his allowance for the expences of his table.——As to the rest, he readily enough agreed to meet his wife half way towards a reconciliation,——assured them, that he was far from requiring any other submission on her part, than what he would set her the example of in himself, and that he wished nothing more than to exchange forgiveness with her.

On this, lady Trusty dispatched a servant directly to Mrs. Munden, to let her know she must needs speak with her immediately ;——which summons was no sooner delivered, than complied with.

The prudent lady having cast about in her mind all that was proper to be done, in order to accomplish the good work she laboured for, and had so much at heart, would not leave it in the power of chance to disappoint what she had so happily begun, and having prevailed over the ill-nature and sourness of the husband, thought it equally necessary to prevent the resentment, or inadvertency of the wife, from frustrating her endeavours.

On being told Mrs. Munden was come, she ran down stairs to receive her,——led her into a parlour, and informed her, as briefly as she could, all that part, which she thought would be most satisfactory to her, of the conversation which had passed between them and Mr. Munden, on her score.

Finding what she said was received by the other more coolly than she wished, she took that privilege, which her rank, her age, and the friendship she had always shewn to her, might justly claim, to remon-
strate

strate to her, that it did not become her situation and character to stand too much upon punctilio's at this time;—that all, that either was, or ought to be dear to womankind, depended on a speedy accommodation with her husband;—‘The unhappy *brulée*,’ said she, ‘has lasted too long,—your servants must certainly know it,—you cannot be assured of their secrecy,—the whole affair, perhaps with large additions to it, will soon become the talk of the town,—every one will be decanting upon it, and how much soever Mr. Munden may be in fault, you cannot hope to escape your own share in the censure.’

Poor Mrs. Munden, who looked upon this lady as a second mother, would not attempt to offer any thing in opposition to the arguments she used; and, besides, could not forbear avowing within herself the justice of them.—‘Well, madam,’ answered she, with a deep sigh, ‘I shall endeavour to follow your ladyship’s advice,—and, since I am a wife, will do my best to make the yoke, I have submitted to, sit as lightly upon me as possible.’

Lady Trusty perceiving her spirits were very much depressed, omitted nothing, that the shortness of time would allow, to persuade her to believe, that her condition was not so unhappy, in reality, as she at present imagined it to be; and having brought her to somewhat of a more chearful temper, conducted her into the room where Sir Ralph and Mr. Munden were still discoursing on the matter in question.

‘Welcome, my fair charge,’ cried the former, taking her by the hand, and drawing her towards Mr. Munden,—‘I have once already had the honour of giving you to this gentleman, permit me to do so a second time;—I hope, with the same satisfaction on both sides, as at first.’

‘On mine, by heaven it is,’ replied Mr. Munden, flying hastily to embrace her, as she moved slowly

slowly forward ;——‘ if my dearest Betſy will
 ‘ promise to forget what is paſt, the pains I have
 ‘ ſuffered, during this interruption of my happineſs;
 ‘ will be a ſufficient ſecurity for her, that I ſhall be
 ‘ very careful for the future, to avoid doing any
 ‘ thing that may again ſubject me to the like miſ-
 ‘ fortune.’

Theſe words, and the tender air which he aſſumed in ſpeaking them, were ſo much beyond what Mrs. Munden could have expected from him, after his late treatment of her, that all her pride, her anger, and even her indifference, ſubſided at that inſtant, and gave place to ſentiments of the moſt gentle nature.

‘ You may believe,’ answered ſhe, with an infinity of ſweetneſs in her voice and eyes, ‘ that I
 ‘ have alſo had my ſhare of anguiſh ; but whatever
 ‘ inquietudes you have ſuſtained on my account muſt
 ‘ be forgotten on your part, as it ſhall be mine to
 ‘ make attonement for them, by every thing in my
 ‘ power, which can flatter me with the hopes of
 ‘ doing ſo.’

Inſenſible and moroſe as Mr. Munden was, he could not avoid, on this obliging behaviour in his fair wife, being touched in reality with ſome ſoft emotions, which he ſo well knew how to magnify the appearance of, that not only herſelf, but the by-ſtanders, imagined he was the moſt tranſported man alive.

Impoſſible is it to expreſs how much Sir Ralph, and his good lady, rejoiced to ſee this happy event : —they entertained them very elegantly at dinner, — in the afternoon they went all together to take the air in Kenſington gardens, — and a great deal of company coming in the evening to viſit lady Truſty, every thing contributed to keep up the ſpirit and good humour of the newly re-united pair.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Contains only some few particulars which followed the reconciliation.

THOUGH this reconciliation was not altogether sincere on the side of Mr. Munden, yet being made in the presence of Sir Ralph, and lady Trusty, it kept him from giving any flagrant demonstrations at present, that it was not so, and he continued to live with his amiable wife in the most seeming good harmony for some time.

She, on her part, performed, with the utmost exactitude all she had promised to him, and though she could not be said to feel for him all that warmth of affection, which renders the discharge of our duty so great a pleasure to ourselves, yet her good nature and good sense well supplied that deficiency, and left him no room to accuse her of the least failure in what might be expected from the best of wives.

During this interval of tranquillity, she lost the society of two persons, the tenderness of whose friendship for her she had experienced in a thousand instances:— Mr. Francis Thoughtless, who had stayed so long in town, merely through the indulgence of his commanding officer, was now obliged to repair to his regiment then quartered at Leeds in Yorkshire, and Sir Ralph Trusty having finished his affairs in town, his lady returned with him to their country seat.

Thus was she almost at once deprived of the only two persons, to whom she could impart her mind without reserve, or on whose advice she could depend in any exigence whatever; for as to her elder brother, he was too eager in the pursuit of his pleasures, and too much absorb'd in them, to be truly solicitous for any thing that did not immediately re-

late to them ;—she saw him but seldom, and when she did so, there was a certain distance in his behaviour towards her, which would not permit her to talk to him with that freedom she could have wished to do.

She had not, however, any fresh motive to regret their departure on this account ;—Mr. Munden continued to behave to her in much the same manner as he had done since the breach had been made up between them ;—he was, indeed very much abroad, but as she was far from being passionately fond of him, and only desired he would treat her civilly when with her, the little she enjoyed of his company was no manner of affliction to her.

She still restrained some part of that gaiety and love of a variety of conversation, which had always been a predominant propensity in her nature, and though in all her excursions, and the liberties she took, she carefully avoided every thing that might taint her virtue, or even cast a blemish on her reputation, yet were they such, as a husband, who had loved with more ardency, would not, perhaps, have been very easy under :—on his part also, the late hours he came home at, —the messages and letters which were daily brought to him by porters, might have given much disquiet to a wife, not defended from jealousy by so great a share of indifference ; —but in this they were perfectly agreed, —neither offered to interfere with the amusements of the other, nor even pretended to enquire into the nature of them.

Though this was a mode of living together, which was far from being capable of producing that happiness, for which the state of marriage was ordained ; yet was it perfectly easy to persons who had so little real affection for each other, and however blamable in the eyes of the truly discreet, escaped the

the censure of the generality of mankind, by its being so frequently practised.

But I shall not expatiate on their present manner of behaviour to each other, since it was not of any long continuance, but proceed to the recital of a little adventure, which, tho' it may seem trifling to the reader in the repetition, will hereafter be found of some consequence.

It was a mighty custom with lady Mellasin and Miss Flora, when they had nothing of more consequence to entertain them, to go among the shops, and amuse themselves with enquiring after new fashions, and looking over that variety of merchandize, which is daily brought to this great mart of vanity and luxury.

Mrs. Munden, while in a virgin state, and a boarder at Mr. Goodman's, used frequently to accompany those ladies, when bent on such sort of rambles, and she still was fond enough of satisfying her curiosity this way, at such times as she found nothing else to do, or was not in a humour to give, or receive visits.

Happening one day to pass by the well-furnished shop of an eminent mercer, and seeing several silks lye spread upon the counter, she was tempted to step in, and examine them more nearly. A great number of others were also taken from the shelves, and laid before her; but she not seeming to approve any of them; the mercer told her he had some curious pieces out of the loom that morning of a quite new pattern, which he had sent his man with to a lady of quality, and expected he would be back in a few minutes, so intreated she would be pleased either to stay a little, or give him directions where she might be waited upon.

Mrs. Munden complied with the former of these requests, and the rather because, while they were talking, she heard from a parlour behind the shop a

harpſichord very finely touched, accompanied with a female voice, which ſung in the moſt barmonious accents, part of this air, compoſed by the celebrated Signior Bononcini :

“ M’infegna l’amor l’inganno,

“ Mi togl’al cor, l’aſſanno,

“ Mi da l’ardir amor,

“ Mi da l’ardir amor.”

The attention Mrs. Munden gave to the muſick, preventing her from ſpeaking, the mercer ſaid he was ſorry ſhe was obliged to wait ſo long ;——“ I rather ought to thank you Sir, for detaining me, ſince
“ I have here an entertainment more elegant than
“ I could have expected elſewhere.”

“ The lady ſings and plays well indeed, madam,” ſaid he ; “ ſhe is a customer of mine, and ſometimes does my wife the favour of paſſing an hour
“ with her.”

The lady ſtill continued playing, and Mrs. Munden expreſſing a more than ordinary pleaſure in hearing her, the complaiſant mercer asked her to walk into the parlour ; to which ſhe replied, ſhe would gladly accept his offer, provided it would be no intrusion ; he aſſured her it would not be accounted ſo in the leaſt, and with theſe words conducted her into the room.

A few words ſerved to introduce her to his wife, who being a very genteel, pretty ſort of a woman, received her with great civility ; but the fair muſicſen was no ſooner told the effect her accents had produced on Mrs. Munden, than tho’ ſhe was a foreigner, and ſpoke very broken english, ſhe returned the compliment made her by that lady on the occaſion, in a manner ſo perfectly free, and withal ſo noble, as diſcovered her to have been bred among, and accuſtomed to conſerſe with perſons in the higheſt ſtations in life.

Vain as Mrs. Munden was of her perfections, she was always ready to acknowledge, and admire those she found in others of her sex. There was something in this lady that attracted her in a peculiar manner ; she took as much delight in hearing her talk, as she had done in hearing her sing ; she longed to be of the number of her acquaintance, and made her several overtures that way, which the other either did not, or would not seem to understand.

The mercer's man returning with the silks his master had mentioned, Mrs. Munden thought, after the obliging entertainment she had received, she could do no less than become a purchaser of something ; accordingly she bought a piece of silk for a night-gown, though at that time she had not the least occasion for it, nor on her coming into the shop had any intention to increase her wardrobe.

Having now no longer a pretence to stay, she gave the mercer directions where to send home the silk, and then took her leave ; but could not do it without telling the lady, that she should think herself extremely happy in having the opportunity of a much longer conversation with her.

On her speaking in this manner, the other appeared in very great confusion ; but having, after a pretty long pause, a little recovered herself, " It is an honour, madam," said she, " I would be extremely ambitious of, and had certainly taken the liberty to request it of you, if there were not a cruel peculiarity in my fate, which deprives me of all hopes of that, and many other blessings I could wish to enjoy."

Mrs. Munden was so much surprized at these words, that she could only reply, she was sorry a lady, who appeared so deserving, should be denied any thing she thought worthy of deserving.

It might well indeed seem a little strange, that a lady so young, beautiful, and accomplished, should

have any motive to induce her to speak in the terms she had done. Mrs. Munden had a good deal of curiosity in her composition, she thought there was something extraordinarily mysterious in the circumstances of this stranger, and was very desirous of penetrating into the secret.

About an hour after she came home, the mercer's man brought home the silk : she enquired of him the name, condition, and place of abode of the young lady she had seen at his master's, but received not the least information from him to any of the questions she had put to him. He told her, that though she often bought things at their shop, yet his master always carried them home himself, and he was intirely ignorant of every thing relating to her.

This a little vexed her, because she doubted not but that if she once found out her name, quality, and where she lived, her invention would supply her with the means of making a more particular discovery. She resolved, therefore, on going again to the shop, under the pretence of buying something, and asking the mercer himself, who she could not imagine would have any interest in concealing what she desired to know.

Some company coming in, prevented her from going that afternoon ; but she went the next morning after breakfast. The mercer not happening to be at home, she was more than once tempted by her impatience to ask for his wife, and as often restrained by the reflection, that such a thing might be looked upon as a piece of impertinence in a person so much a stranger : she left the house without speaking to any body but the man she had seen the day before.

Her curiosity, however, would not perhaps have suffered her to stop here, if something of more moment had not fallen out to engage her attention, and put the other out of her head for the present.

The

The nobleman on whom Mr. Munden depended for the gift so often mentioned in this history, had been a long time out of town, and was but lately returned. He had heard in the country that Mr. Munden was married, and that his wife was very beautiful and accomplished.

On Mr. Munden's going to pay his compliments to him on his arrival,—"I congratulate you," said he;—"I am told you are married, and have got one of the prettiest and most amiable women in London for a wife."

"As to beauty my lord," replied he, "there is no certain standard for it, and I am intirely of the poet's mind, that

"'Tis in no face, but in the lover's eye."

"But whatever she is," continued he, "I am afraid she would be too vain if she knew the honour your lordship does her, in making this favourable mention of her."

"Not at all," rejoined the peer, "but I shall not take her character from common fame;—you must give me leave to be a judge of the perceptions I have heard so much talk of;" besides, pursued he, "I have a mind to see what sort of a house you keep;—I think I will come some day and take a dinner with you."

It is not to be doubted, but that Mr. Munden omitted nothing that might assure his lordship, that it was an honour that he was extremely ambitious of, and should be equally proud of receiving, though he durst not have presumed to have asked it.

The very next day being appointed for this grand visit, he went home to his wife, transported with the gracious behaviour of his patron towards him. He threw a large parcel of guineas into her lap, and charged her to spare nothing that might entertain their noble guest in a manner besitting his high rank,
and

and the favours he expected one day to receive from him.

Mr. Munden could not have given any commands that would be more pleasing to his fair wife: —Feasting and grand company were her delight. She set about making the necessary preparations with the greatest alacrity imaginable; and it must be acknowledged, that considering the shortness of the time, she had sufficient to have employed the most able and experienced housewife.

C H A P. XXXIV.

Is only the prelude to greater matters.

IT might justly be reckoned a piece of impertinence to take up the reader's time with a repetition of the bill of fare of the entertainment made on the above-mentioned occasion; it will be sufficient to say, that every thing was extremely elegant; that it was composed of the best chosen dishes, which were all served up in the greatest order; and that there was as great a variety of them as consisted with the table of a private gentleman, without incurring the censure of profuseness.

Such as it was, however, the noble lord seemed highly delighted with it; he praised every thing that came before him almost to a degree of flattery, and took all opportunities of being yet more lavish in his encomiums on the beauty, wit, and elegance of the fair provider.

Mr. Munden was transported within himself at the satisfaction his patron expressed, and his wife also felt a secret joy on hearing the fine things said of her, which sparkled in her eyes, and gave an additional lustre to all her charms.

This nobleman, though past what is called the prime of life, was far from having arrived at those
years.

years, which bring on decay ;——he was besides of a sanguine vigorous complexion——had a very graceful person——a fine address——a great affluence of wit, and something so soft and engaging in his manner of behaviour to the ladies, as rendered him still a prodigious favourite with them.

He was too good a judge of what is amiable in womankind, not to discover immediately the many perfections Mrs. Munden was mistress of ;——he felt the whole force of her charms, and as he loved beauty more for his own sake than for that of the possessor, and never liked without desiring to enjoy, his eyes told her at every glance, that he languished for an opportunity of declaring in a different manner the sentiments he had for her.

Mrs. Munden perfectly understood the language in which she found herself addressed ; but had she been less learned in it, an explanation soon presented itself. Her husband stepping to the head of the stair-case to give some orders to a servant, the peer took hold of one of her hands, and kissing it with the utmost raptures, ‘ Divine creature,’ cried he, ‘ how unjust is fortune, that a face and person so formed for universal adoration is not placed in a higher, and more conspicuous sphere of life !’

She had not time to make any reply, —— Mr. Munden returned that moment ;——nor had the noble lord the least opportunity while he stayed of speaking one word to her, that was improper for a husband to be witness of.

He prolonged the time of his departure to a greater length than could have been expected from a person, whose high office in the state permitted him much fewer hours of leisure, than those in middling stations of life are happy enough to enjoy :——when he went away he assured both the husband and the wife, that he quitted them with the
utmost

utmost reluctance, and that he had never past a day more agreeably in his whole life.

Mr. Munden was now in such high good humour, that he no sooner found himself alone with his fair wife, than he took her in his arms, and kissed her very heartily :——a favour not common with him since the first week of their marriage.—— He told her moreover she had behaved that day like an angel,——that nothing could be more elegant than the dinner she had prepared, and that he could not have expected such a variety of covers ; and so fine a desert for the money he gave her for that purpose.

‘ I think myself very happy,’ answered she, ‘ that you approve so well of my management, but I fancy,’ continued she, with a smile, ‘ you will have some better opinion of my œconomy, when I shall tell you, that it cost less than you imagine.’

‘ Is it possible !’ cried he, in a pleasing surprise : ‘ I rather thought you had been kind enough to have added somewhat out of your own pocket, to render the entertainment so perfectly complete.’

‘ No, I assure you,’ resumed she, ‘ there remains no less than these three guineas of the sum you allowed me for this day’s expence.’——With these words, she laid the pieces she had mentioned on the table ; which he was so ungenerous as to take immediately up, and put into his own pocket.

Nay, Mr. Munden,’ said she, while he was putting up the money,——‘ this is not dealing altogether so fairly by me, as I have done by you :—I expected, that the trouble I have been at, deserved at least to be rewarded with what I have saved by my frugality.

Take

‘Take care, my dear,’ replied he laughing, ‘how you lessen the merit of what you have done,——I am willing to take it as an obligation to me, and sure you value an obligation to me at a much higher rate than three pieces.’

Though all this passed on both sides in a jocular way, yet as it served to shew the niggardliness of Mr. Munden’s temper, cannot be supposed to have increased either the love, or respect his wife had for him.

She made however no other answer to what he had last said, than to tell him that she found he was fashionable enough to suffer virtue to be its own reward, and then turned the conversation, and continued in the same cheerful humour as before any mention had been made of the three guineas:——Mr. Munden did not go abroad the whole evening, but whether he chose to sup at home, for the pleasure of enjoying his wife’s company, or for the sake of re-partaking the remainder of those dainties, which had been so highly praised at dinner, is a point, which perhaps might admit of some dispute.

It is certain, indeed, the yet unsubdued vanity of this young lady, made her feel so much innate satisfaction in the admiration their noble visiter had expressed of her person and accomplishments, as gave a double sprightliness to her conversation that whole evening, and might perhaps render her more than ordinarily lovely in the eyes of her husband.

It is very far from being an improbability, that some people may be apt to imagine she built a little too much on the veracity of the praises bestowed upon her by that nobleman; but those, who think this way, will be convinced of their error, when they will presently find how far her conjectures were justified in this point.

She

She was sitting the next morning in a careless posture at one of the windows that looked into the street, ruminating sometimes on one thing, and sometimes on another; when she could not help observing a fellow on the other side of the way, who kept walking backwards and forwards before the house, which though he frequently past thirty or forty paces, yet he took care never to lose sight of.

This seemed a little odd to her, as she sat there a considerable time, and the man still continued on his post:—she doubted not but that he wanted to speak with some one or other of her family, but had not the least notion his business was with herself.

Being told breakfast waited for her, she went into her dressing-room, where she usually took it, and thought no further of the man, till Mr. Munden was dressed and gone out, but in less than a minute after he was so, she received intelligence from her footman, and there was a person had a letter for her, and said he would deliver it into no hands but her own.

On this she ran immediately down stairs, and found to her great surprise, that he was no other than the fellow, that she had seen loitering so long about the house.—‘I am ordered, madam,’ said he, ‘to give you this,’ and at the same time presented her with a letter:—‘From whom does it come?’ demanded she: ‘I am ignorant,’ answered he, ‘both of the person who sent it, and the business it contains:—my orders were only to deliver it into your own hands;’ and with these words went away with all the speed he could.

It must be confessed a married woman ought not to have received a letter brought her in this manner, and without knowing whence it came, but curiosity prevailed

Miss BETSY THOUGHTL

prevailed above discretion, and she hastily opening it, found it contained these lines.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

Loveliest of your Sex.

“ **A**S not to adore you would be the greatest
“ proof of insensibility, so not to wish, and
“ even attempt every thing consistent with the cha-
“ racter of a man of honour, for the obtaining
“ some reward for that adoration, would be the
“ most stupid piece of self-denial, becoming only
“ of a stoick, or one no less dead to all the joys of
“ life,---The force of your charms has made the
“ conquest of a heart, which only waits a fa-
“ vourable opportunity of throwing itself at your
“ feet, not altogether without hope, spite of the
“ circumstance you are in, of being in some mea-
“ sure acceptable to you,---at least it should be so,
“ if the most ardent and perfect passion that ever
“ was, joined with the power and will of render-
“ ing you all manner of services can give it merit
“ in your eyes.”

“ A very short time, I flatter myself, will ex-
“ plain to you what at present may seem a myste-
“ ry : — benignant love will furnish the most
“ faithful of his votaries with the means of declar-
“ ing himself at full, and the flame with which he
“ is inspired, instruct him also to give you such
“ testimonies of his everlasting attachment, as the
“ good understanding you are mistress of, will not
“ permit you to reject: Till when, I only beseech
“ you to think with some share of tenderness on,
“ Your concealed adorer.”

Utterly impossible is it to describe the situation
of Mrs. Munden's mind, after having several times
read over this epistle, and well examined the pur-
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port of it : — she doubted not one moment, but that it was dictated by the noble lord she had seen the day before, and whose behaviour to her had in some degree corresponded with the sentiments contained in it. — If her vanity was delighted with the conquest she had made ; her pride was shocked at that assurance, which the daring lover seemed to flatter himself with of gaining her, and her virtue much more alarmed at the attempts, which his rank and fortune might embolden him to make for that end.

At first she was resolved to shew the letter to her husband the moment he came home, and acquaint him with her sentiments on the matter, that he might take proper precautions to prevent her from being exposed to any future attacks from this dangerous nobleman.

But on more mature deliberation, her mind changed : — Mr. Munden was at present in tolerable good humour with her ; — she was willing if possible to preserve it in him, and as she could not but think an information of this kind would give him a great deal of uneasiness, so she had also reason to apprehend the effects of it might in some measure, innocent as she was, fall upon herself.

He had never yet discovered the least emotions of jealousy, and she knew not what suspicions her having received such a letter from one person might raise in him, in relation to others. — ‘ He may possibly’, — said she to herself, ‘ look upon every man that visits me, as an invader of his right, and consequently I should be debarred from all conversation with the sex.’

‘ Besides,’ continued she, ‘ I am not certain, that this letter was sent me by the noble lord, or that he has in reality entertained any designs to the prejudice of my virtue ; — there is indeed a strong probability of it, even by his behaviour towards

‘ towards me yesterday ; yet it may not be so,---
 ‘ appearances often deceive us ; and I might take
 ‘ that for the effects of love, which proceeded
 ‘ only from complaisance ; but whatever his in-
 ‘ tentions are, it would certainly be the extremest
 ‘ folly and madness in me to enflame Mr. Munden
 ‘ against a person on whom his interest so much
 ‘ depends.

‘ It is no matter therefore, went she still on,
 ‘ whether it be the noble lord in question, or any
 ‘ other person who presumes to think so meanly
 ‘ of me, as to address me in this audacious man-
 ‘ ner ; it is doubtless in my power to keep out
 ‘ of the way of receiving any farther insults from
 ‘ him ; and I am sufficiently capable myself of
 ‘ being the guardian of my own honour without
 ‘ disturbing a husband’s peace about it.

‘ Thus ended the debate she had within herself
 on this occasion :---she committed the letter to
 the flames, and resolved, that if ever the author
 was hardy enough to discover himself, to treat
 him with all the contempt due to him from af-
 fronted virtue.

CH A P. XXXV.

*Contains what every reader of an ordinary capacity,
 by this time may easily guess at.*

SOME of my readers will doubtless think
 Mrs. Munden entirely justified in making a
 secret of the above-mentioned letter to her hus-
 band, as she did so in regard to his peace ; but
 others again who maintain that there ought to be
 no reserve between persons so closely united, will
 condemn her for it ;---for my p^{ar}t, I shall forbear
 to give my vote upon the matter ; and only say,
 that if she had not acted with less prudence soon

after, she might have saved herself a very great shock, and her husband much vexation.

It was no more than three days after the great man had dined there, that Mr. Munden received a billet from him, which contained as follows :

To GEORGE MUNDEN, Esq;

“ Dear Munden,

“ I Have so few days that I can call my own,
 “ that I am willing to make those few as
 “ happy as I can, and on that motive desire
 “ your’s, and your amiable wife’s company to
 “ dinner with me to-morrow ;—I leave you
 “ to make both my request and compliments ac-
 “ ceptable to her, and am,

“ With all sincerity,

“ Dear Munden,

“ Your’s, &c. &c.

* * * *

“ P. S. I shall have a female relation with me,
 “ who will rejoice in an opportunity of becom-
 “ ing acquainted with Mrs. Munden.”

Mr. Munden desired the servant, who brought this, to give his own and wife’s most humble duty to his lord, and assure his lordship, they would not fail to attend his commands.

Some friends being with him, when this invitation was brought, hindered him from saying any thing of it at that time to his wife, but they were no sooner gone, than with an air and voice elated even to an excess, he told her of the high favour conferred upon them by his right honourable patron.

Mrs. Munden was now more than ever convinced of the base designs lord * * * * had upon her, and that the letter she had received was sent by him :— she therefore immediately determined within herself to let him see, by her not complying with this invitation, that she was neither ignorant
 what

what his intentions were, nor would do any thing that might give him the least encouragement to prosecute them.

But as she still judged it was wholly improper to acquaint Mr. Munden with any thing of the affair, she could form no other contrivance to avoid accompanying him in this visit, than by pretending herself seized with a sudden indisposition, which she resolved to do some few hours before the arrival of that wherein they should set out.

If she had persisted in this mind, it would have been highly laudable indeed ;—but, alas! the next morning inspired her with very different sentiments ;—vanity, that sly subverter of our best resolutions, suggested to her, that there was no necessity for her behaving in the manner she had designed.

‘ What should I fear ?’ said she to herself, ‘ what danger threatens either my virtue, or my reputation.—A wife may certainly go any where with her husband, besides, a lady will be there, —a relation of his lordship’s,—he can communicate nothing to me in their presence, that I should blush to hear, and it would be rather ridiculous prudery than discretion in me, to deny myself the satisfaction of such good company.’

It must be acknowledged, for it but too plainly appears from every circumstance of this lady’s conduct both before and after marriage, that the unhappy propensity in her nature, for attracting universal admiration, rendered her little regardful either of the guilt, or the disquiets to which her beauty was accessory :---if she was admired and loved, she cared not to what end ;---in fine, it made her perfectly uncorrupt and pure, as her own inclinations were, rather triumph in than regret the power she had of inspiring the most inordinate and vicious ones in others. A a 3 Thus

Thus, more delighted than alarmed, she equip'd herself with all the arts and labour'd industry of female pride, for securing the conquest she had gained ;--safe as she imagined herself from all the encroachments of presumptuous love, she pleased herself with the thoughts of being looked upon by the adoring peer, as Adam did upon the forbidden fruit ;--longing, wishing, but not daring to approach.

She had but just finished her embellishments, and was looking in the great glass to see if all was right, when Mr. Munden sent up stairs to know if she was ready, and to tell her his noble patron had sent his own chariot to fetch them :---on hearing this, she immediately tript down stairs, singing as she went this part of an old song,

With an air, and a face,

And a shape and a grace,

Let me charm like Beauty's goddess.

Oh, how will the prudent, reserved part of the sex lament, that a young lady, endowed with so many perfections, so many amiable qualities, should thus persevere in a vanity, of which she had already experienced such vexatious consequences.

Lord **** received them in a fashion, which fully gratified the ambition of Mr. Munden, and the yet less warrantable expectations of his wife :--the lady mentioned in the letter, was already with him, who, on his lordship's presenting Mrs. Munden to her, saluted her with abundance of sweetness and good breeding :--she was a person of about thirty years of age ; had been extremely handsome, and still retained the remains of charms, which must have been very powerful in their bloom ;--nor was her conversation less agreeable than her person ;--she said little indeed, but what she said was extremely to the purpose, and very entertaining :

entertaining :---there was notwithstanding a certain air of melancholy about her, which she in vain attempted to conceal, tho' it was easy to perceive she made use of her utmost efforts for that purpose.

His lordship was extremely gay and spiritous, as indeed were all the company, during the whole time at dinner ; but it was no sooner over than he said to Mr. Munden,---‘ dear Munden I have a business to communicate to you, which these ladies must forgive me if I make a secret of to them ;’---with these words he took Mr. Munden into another room, and spoke to him in the following manner :

‘ A person,’ said he, ‘ has been guilty of an action in regard to me, which it is neither consistent with my honour, or my humour to put up with :---I will shew you,’ continued he, giving him an unsealed letter, ‘ what I have wrote to him upon the occasion, and that will instruct you how I intend to proceed, and at the same time convince you of the confidence I repose in your friendship for me.’

Mr. Munden took the letter out of his lordship’s hands, and found the contents as follow.

TO WILLIAM W——, Esq;

“ SIR,

“ **T**Hough the affront you have offered me
“ deserves the severest treatment, yet in
“ consideration of our former intimacy, I shall
“ wave my peerage, and require no other satisfaction from you than what any private gentleman has a right to demand of another, in a case
“ of the like nature.

“ I shall be in the Green-park to-morrow about eight in the morning, where I believe
“ you have honour enough to meet me ;-- bring
“ with

“ with you any one person you think fit :---the
 “ gentleman, who puts this into your hands, will
 “ accompany me.

“ Not that I mean our friends should be en-
 “ gaged in the quarrel, but think it proper, that
 “ there should be some witnesses, that no foul
 “ play is attempted on either side.---I am,

“ Expecting your ready compliance,

“ Sir,

“ Yours, &c.

‘ You see, Munden,’ said he, perceiving he
 had done reading, ‘ the assurance I build on the
 ‘ sincerity of your attachment to me.’ ‘ Your
 ‘ lordship does me an infinity of honour,’ replied
 the other with a low bow, ‘ and I have nothing
 ‘ to regret, but that my sword must lie idle while
 ‘ your lordship’s is employed.’

‘ As for that,’---resumed the peer, ‘ I always
 ‘ thought it the utmost folly and injustice to set
 ‘ two people on cutting one another’s throats,
 ‘ merely in compliment to their friends :---but
 ‘ my dear Munden,’---pursued he, looking on
 his watch ; ‘ I would have you go immediately ;
 ‘ --- I believe you will find him at the Cocoa-
 ‘ tree ; he is generally there about this hour,---
 ‘ but if not, they will direct you where to find
 ‘ him.’

He sealed the letter while he was speaking,
 which being again delivered to Mr. Munden, they
 both returned into the room where the ladies
 were.---Mr. Munden stayed no longer than while
 his footman called a hackney-coach to the door ;
 as he was going out the nobleman said to him, I
 doubt not but you will be back as soon as possible,
 in the mean time we three will amuse ourselves
 with a game at ombre.

Mrs. Munden was a good deal surprised at her
 husband’s

husband's departure, but had much more reason to be so, as well as alarmed, in a moment or two after.

Cards were but just laid upon the table, when a servant came hastily, and told the lady a messenger had brought word that her mother was suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit ;---that it was not yet known whether the old lady would recover, and that she must come home that instant.

On this she started up, seemed in a most terrible fright, and took her leave with a precipitation natural enough to the occasion, in a daughter possessed of any share of duty or affection.

This part of the history must be very unintelligible indeed, if the reader has not by this time seen, that all this was but a feint contrived by the amorous nobleman, in order to get an opportunity of employing the whole battery of his rhetoric against the virtue he was impatient to triumph over.

This pretended kinswoman was in fact, no more than a cast-off mistress of his lordship's, but having her dependance entirely upon him, was obliged to submit in every thing to his will, and become an assistant to those pleasures with others, which she no longer could afford him in her own person.

She was brought to his house that day for two reasons,---first, as he knew not what fears, and what apprehensions the beauty of Mrs. Munden might raise in her husband, and render him suspicious of the true motive of his being sent away, had no other company been there ; and secondly to prevent that fair intended victim of his unwarrantable flame, from being too suddenly alarmed at finding herself alone with him.

Mrs. Munden however had no time to examine
into

into the meaning of what she saw, and all she could recollect in that instant was, that she was in the house, and wholly in the power of a person, who had designs upon her, to which neither her honour, nor her inclinations would permit her to acquiesce, and trembled for the event, but concealing the disorders of her mind as much as possible :-- ‘ Well my lord,’--said she, taking up the cards, and beginning to shuffle them, ‘ since we are deprived of a third person by this melancholy accident, what think your lordship of a game at piquet.’

‘ I think,’ answered he, looking upon her with eyes, which redoubled all her terrors ;—‘ that to waste the precious time in cards, and throw away the golden opportunity of telling you how much my soul adores you, would be a stupidity, which neither love, nor fortune could forgive me for.’

In speaking these words he snatched one of her hands, and in spite of her endeavours to withdraw it, pressed it to his mouth with an eagerness, which would have convinced her, if she had not been so before, of the vehemence of those desires with which he was inflamed.

‘ Fie my Lord,’ cried she, with an air as haughty and reserved as it was in the power of any woman to assume, ‘ this is not language with which the wife of him you are pleased to call your friend, could expect to be entertained.’

‘ Unreasonably urged,’ cried he : ‘ Ought my friendship to the husband render me insensible of the beauties of the wife ? Or would your generous consenting to reward my passion dissolve the union between us ?--no, on the contrary, it would rather be cemented ;—I should then love him not only for his own, but for your sake also, and should think myself bound to stretch my power to its extreme limits to do him service :—be assured,
‘ my

‘ my angel, that in blessing me you fix the happiness of your husband, and establish his future fortune in the world.

These words, joined to Mr. Munden’s being gone away she knew not on what errand, made her shudder with the apprehensions, that he might have been tempted by the hopes of interest to become yielding to the dishonourable intentions of his patron ;—— but willing to be more confirmed ; ‘ I hope my

‘ lord,’ answered she, ‘ that you cannot think Mr. Munden has so mean a soul as to accept of an establishment on such conditions.’

‘ I could name some husbands, and those of the first rank, too,’ said he, ‘ who to oblige a friend, and for particular reasons, have consented to the complaisance of their wives in this point, but I desire no such sacrifice from Mr. Munden ; there is no necessity for it, I have now sent him on a pretence too plausible for him to suspect the real motive of my wanting to get rid of him : —— I had a lady here also for no other end than to prevent him feeling any disquiet on leaving us altogether ;——I shall always take the same precautions,——all our interviews shall be as private as your own wishes, and my happiness be an eternal secret to the whole world as well as to your husband.

‘ Come then my charmer,’ added he, attempting to take her in his arms ;--- ‘ we have no time to lose,——away then with all idle scruples ; -- yield to my embraces ;——assist my raptures, and be assured that my whole soul,——my fortune, and all my power can give, shall be at your disposal.’

It was the discomposure of Mrs. Munden’s mind, which alone hindered her from interrupting him during the former part of his speech ; but the close of it ! joined with the action, which accompanied it, obliged

obliged her to collect all her scattered spirits, and flying to the other end of the room, in order to avoid his grasp ;—‘ forbear my lord,’ said she,—‘ know, I despise your offers ; and set my virtue at a much higher rate, than all the advantage you, or the whole world would give in exchange.’

Lord **** finding he had to do with a mistress of uncommon spirit, thought best to alter the manner of his addresses to her, and approaching her with an air much more humble and submissive than he had hitherto done ;---‘ how I adore,’ cried he, ‘ this noble disinterestedness in you ;---you will grant nothing but to love alone,---be it so ;---your beauty is indeed above all other price.---Let your husband reap all the advantages, and let it be yours to have the pleasure, like heaven to save from despair the man who cannot live without you.’

Perceiving, or at least imagining he perceived some abatement in the fierceness of her eyes, on the change of his deportment, he persisted in it,—he even threw himself on his knees before her ;—took hold of her hands ;——bathed them alternately with tears, then dried them with his kisses ;—in fine, he omitted nothing that the most passionate love, resolute to accomplish its gratification, could suggest to soften her into compliance.

At another time, how would the vanity of this lady have been elated to see a person of such high consideration in the world, thus prostrate at her feet ; but at this, the reflection how much she was in his power, and the uncertainty how far he might exert that power, put to silence all the dictates of her pride, and rendered her, in reality, much more in awe of him than he affected to be of her :——she turned her eyes continually towards the door, in hopes of seeing Mr. Munden enter ; and never had she wished for his presence with the impatience she now did.

The noble lord equally dreaded his return, and finding the replies she made to his pressures somewhat more moderate than they had been on the first opening his suit, flattered himself that a very little compulsion would complete the work : — he therefore resolved to dally no longer, and having usher'd in his design with a prelude of some warm kisses and embraces, was about to draw her into another room.

She struggled with all her might, but her efforts that way being in vain, she shrieked and call'd aloud for help. — This a little shocked him, — he let her go : ‘ What do you mean, madam ? ’ said he : — ‘ Would you expose yourself and me to the ridicule of my servants ! ’ — ‘ I will expose myself to any thing,’ answered she, ‘ rather than to the ruin and everlasting infamy your lordship is preparing for me.’

‘ Call not by so harsh a name,’ cried he, ‘ the effects of the most tender passion that ever was : — by heavens I love you more than life, nay, life without you is not worth the keeping.’ — Speaking these words he was about to lay hold of her again, and her cries having brought no body to her assistance, she must infallibly have been lost, if her better angel had not in that instant directed her eyes to a bell, which hung in the pannel of the wainscot just behind the door of the room into which he was forcing her, — she snatched the handle, and rung it with such vehemence that it resounded through the house.

This action made him release her with a kind of an indignant sling, and a servant immediately coming up, — ‘ I believe,’ said she to him, ‘ my servant is below, — pray order him to call me a chair this moment.’ — The peer, not often accustomed to such rebuffs, was so much confounded at the strength of her resolution, that he had

not power to utter one word, and she fearing another assault, ran to the door, which the footman hastily shut after him, and having opened it, '—Your lordship,' said she, 'has used me in a manner neither worthy of yourself nor me, — I leave you to blush at the remembrance.'

She waited not to hear what reply he would have made, but flew down stairs into the hall, where a chair being presently brought, she threw herself into it, extremely disconcerted in her dress as well as mind.

C H A P. XXXVI.

Contains a brief recital of several very remarkable, and equally affecting occurrences, of which the last mentioned extraordinary adventure was productive, and which may justly enough be look'd upon as yet more extraordinary than even the adventure itself.

MR. Munden, who was no less pleased and vain on the confidence his noble patron seemed to repose in him, than he was ambitious of the favours he hoped to receive from him, had been extremely diligent in the execution of that commission he had been entrusted with, but found much more difficulty in it than he could have imagined.

He was told at the bar of the Cocoa-tree, that the gentleman he enquired for had not been there since morning; — that sir John E — had taken him home with him to dinner, and that in all probability they were still together.

Mr. Munden, on this, order'd the coachman to drive to Mark-lane with all the speed he could, but had, on his coming there, the mortification to hear, that Mr. W — had left sir John about a quarter
of

of an hour before, and was gone to the other end of the town; on which he drove back to the Cocoa-tree, thinking he might now meet him there, but was again disappointed.

They informed him, however, that Mr. W— had just called in, but staid no longer than to tell them he would be there again in half an hour. — Mr. Munden was impatient at this delay, but could not think of returning to lord ***, without having done the business he was sent upon: he therefore sat down, and waited till the other came, which was somewhat sooner than the time he had been made to hope.

These gentlemen, though far from being intimately acquainted, were not altogether strangers, having frequently met at the levee of lord ***.

— They now saluted each other with the utmost politeness, after which, Mr. Munden drawing him to the most retired part of the room, ‘I have had a chace after you, sir,’ said he, ‘for a good part of this afternoon, and which would have been impertinent in me, if not excuseable by my being under an indispenfible obligation of seeing you.’

‘Then, sir,’ replied the other, ‘whatever the business be, I shall think myself happy in being found.’ — ‘This, sir, will inform you,’ said Mr. Munden, giving him the letter. ‘From lord ***,’ cried Mr. W—, as soon as he saw the superscription, — ‘It is so,’ answered Mr. Munden, ‘and I am heartily sorry for the occasion.’

Mr. W— made no reply to what Mr. Munden said, till he had examined the contents of the letter; and then after putting it into his pocket with a careless air, ‘I see into the meaning of this,’ said he; ‘an ugly accident, which I have but lately discovered, has, I believe, misrepresented me to his lordship: — could I be capable of what

‘ he at present thinks I am, I should be utterly unworthy of the condescension he vouchsafes me by this invitation ; — but, sir, all this is founded on a mistake, which may easily be rectified ; — I will not give his lordship the trouble of going to the green park, I will wait on him at his own house at the hour he mentions, and if what I have to say to him, does not fully convince him of my innocence, will follow either to that, or any other place he pleases, tho’ no consideration in the world, except his own commands, should compel me to draw my sword against a breast I so much love and reverence.’

Mr. Munden replied, that he should be extremely glad to find an affair, which at present seemed to threaten such fatal consequences, was amicably made up ; and after having assured him, that he would deliver what he had said, to his lordship, in the most exact manner, was about to take his leave, but could not do it so soon as he desired, the other still detaining him by beginning some subject or other of conversation, which, how frivolous soever, Mr. Munden could not break off too suddenly without incurring censure of abruptness, and ill manners.

Lord **** in the mean time was in the utmost agitation ; — not for the return of Mr. Munden, for he very well knew the message he would bring, but he had taken a great deal of pains to no purpose : — the beauty of Mrs. Munden had inspired him with the most eager desire of enjoying her ; — the gaiety of her temper, joined to the temptations in his power to offer, had given him an almost assured hope of gaining her ; — and now to find himself thus repulsed, — repulsed with such disdain, left a surprize upon him which very much increased the shock of his disappointment.

Besides,

Besides, as he doubted not but she would inform her husband of all that had passed between them, it gave the most mortal stab to that haughtiness too incident to opulence and grandeur, to reflect he had given a man so much beneath him, an opportunity of triumphing over him in his mind.

He had not recovered his confusion, and was walking backwards and forwards in his drawing-room, with a disordered motion, when Mr. Munden returned, to whom he neither spoke, nor look'd upon. The satisfaction this gentleman had felt on finding the business of his embassy was like to terminate so happily, was very much damped at seeing himself received in this manner.

'I did not expect to find your lordship alone,' said Mr. Munden, — 'I believe not,' replied he; 'but an unlucky accident at home deprived me of my cousin's company, and your wife it seems did not think herself safe with me.'

These last words, and the contemptuous tone in which they were expressed, put him into the extremest consternation; — 'I hope, my lord,' cried he, 'that Mrs. Munden cannot have so far forgot herself as to have acted in any manner unbecoming of the respect due to your lordship.' — 'Fine women will have their caprices,' resumed the peer; — 'but no matter, let no more be said of it.'

Mr. Munden then proceeded to repeat what Mr. W— had said to him, but his lordship took no notice, and seemed entirely unconcerned all the time he was speaking; till the other adding, that if his lordship thought proper, he would attend him in the morning, in order to be at hand, in case the event should require his presence: — on which the peer replied peevishly, — 'No, no; — you need not come, — I believe there

‘ will be no occasion; — if there be, I can send for you.’

After this, Mr. Munden easily perceiving his company was rather troublesome than agreeable, made a low obeisance, and withdrew, almost distracted in his mind at this sudden turn of temper in his patron, and no less impatient to hear what his wife had to say on that account.

It was not in one of the best of humours, as the reader may easily imagine, that he now came home, nor did he find Mrs. Munden in one very proper to alleviate his vexation. She was extremely pensive, and when he asked her in somewhat of an imperious voice the reason of having left lord **** in so abrupt a manner, ‘ When you,’ said she, ‘ forsook the guardianship of my honour, it was time for me to take the defence of it upon myself, which I could do no other way than by flight.’

‘ What is it you mean?’ cried he, — ‘ I am certain my lord has too much friendship for me, to offer any rudeness to you.’ — ‘ Be not too certain,’ answered she, ‘ of the friendship of that base great man.’ — She then began to repeat the discourse, with which his lordship had entertained her, after being left alone with him, but had gone through a very small part of it, before her husband interrupted her, saying with a kind of a malicious sneer, — that he was positive there was nothing at all in what she apprehended; — that it was impossible for the noble lord to be in earnest when he talked to her in such terms; — that she had only been deceived by her own vanity, to mistake for a serious design upon her virtue, what was only meant for meer gallantry; — and then added with more passion, that he feared her idle resentment had lost him all his interest with the best of friends.

‘ Good

‘ Good Heaven ! ’ — cried she, — ‘ defend me, and all virtuous women from such gallantries ; ’ — ‘ but know, sir, continued she, with a great deal of vehemence ; — ‘ that but for that idle resentment, as you are pleased to call it, my ruin and your dishonour would have been compleated by this best of friends.’

‘ How,’ said Mr. Munden eagerly, — ‘ he did not sure proceed to actions ? ’ Perceiving he was now in a disposition to listen with more attention to what she said than hitherto he had done, she hesitated not to acquaint him with every particular of his lordship’s behaviour to her, and the means by which she had defended herself.

During his recital, Mr. Munden bit his lips, and appeared in very great emotions ; — he spoke not a word however, till his fair wife, pitying the anxieties she saw him under, desired him to think no more of this accident since it was so happily got over : — ‘ It may be so in your opinion,’ answered he fiercely, — ‘ but not in mine : — I foresee the consequences, though you perhaps think not of them. — ’Tis true, my lord’s behaviour is not to be justified, nor can yours in regard to me be so ; you ought to have considered the dependance I had on him, and not have carried things with so high a hand ; — you might have doubtless evaded this attempt by more gentle, and less affrontive methods ; but that cursed pride of yours must be gratified, though at the expence of all my expectations : — ’ With these words he flung out of the room, and this was all the return she met with from her ungrateful husband, for having resisted with such courage and resolution, temptations, which some women would have thought themselves absolved for yielding to the force of.

Ill-natured and perverse as Mr. Munden was, it
must

must be confessed, that his present situation nevertheless merited some compassion:—he had a great share of ambition;—loved both pleasure and grandeur to an excess; and though far from being of a generous disposition, the pride and vanity of his humour made him do many things through ostentation, which his estate would not well support:—he kept company with persons of rank and fortune, much superior to his own, and as he bore an equal part in their expences whenever he was with them, he stood in need of some addition to his revenue:—well therefore might he be chagrined at an accident, that cast so dark a cloud over that prospect of interest and preferment he had flattered himself with from Lord ****.

But though this was the main point, it was not the sole subject of his discontent.—The motives for his being sent by lord **** to Mr. W—, the pretended quarrel between them, and the trifling excuses made by the latter to detain him from making too quick a return, were all too obvious for him not to be assured that gentleman was priyy, and agreed to be an assistant in the design his lordship had upon his wife.

Mr. W—, though the representative of a borough in C—, was indeed no more than a creature of lord ****, to whose interest alone he was indebted for his seat in parliament; but it was not because Mr. Munden knew him to be obliged to do every thing enjoined by his Lordship, that restrained the resentment he conceived against him from breaking out, but because he considered that a quarrel between them on this score might occasion the affair to become public, and expose both himself and wife to the ridicule of as many as should hear of it.

Wrath, when enervate, especially if inflamed
by

by any just provocation, is certainly very dreadful to be borne, and what this injured husband sustained in the first emotions of it, must have excited the pity of every reader of this history, if he had not afterwards meanly vented it where he had not the least occasion for disgust, but rather of the highest love, tenderness, and admiration.

In the midst of these perplexities, however, let us leave him for a while, and return to her whose beauty had been the innocent cause of all this trouble to him, and danger to herself.

Wonderful indeed were the effects this last adventure produced in her; — many times before had she been on the very verge of ruin, and as often indebted merely to fortune for her preservation from the mischiefs, into which her inadvertency had almost plunged her; — but none of those dangers, — those escapes had ever been capable of making any lasting impression on her mind, or fixing her resolution to avoid running again into the same mistakes.

The cruel reproaches and reflections cast on her by Mr. Munden, filled her not now with the least resentment; for though she deserved them not upon the score he made them, yet she was conscious, that she did so for going to the house of lord ***, after having the strongest reasons to believe he had dishonourable intentions towards her.

She blushed to remember, that she had given herself leave to be pleased at the thoughts of appearing amiable in the eyes of that great man: — ‘Good God!’ cried she, ‘what infatuation! possess’d me! — Am I not married? — Is not all I am the property of Mr. Munden! — Is it not highly criminal in any one to offer to invade his right! — And can I be so wicked to take delight in the guilt, to which I am in a manner accessory!’

‘The

‘The vanities of my virgin state,’ continued she, ‘might plead some excuse; — but nothing now can be urged in my defence for persevering in them. — The pride of subduing hearts is mine no more; — no man can now pretend to love me but with the basest and most shameful views. — The man who dares to tell me he adores me, contradicts himself by that very declaration, and while he would persuade me he has the highest opinion of me, discovers he has in reality the meanest.’

In fine, she now saw herself, and the errors of her past conduct in their true light: — ‘How strange a creature have I been!’ cried she, ‘how inconsistent with myself! I knew the character of a coquet both silly and insignificant, yet did every thing in my power to acquire it: — I aimed to inspire awe and reverence in the men, yet by my imprudence emboldened them to the most unbecoming freedoms with me: — I had sense enough to discern real merit in those who profest themselves my lovers, yet affected to treat most ill those, in whom I found the greatest share of it. — Nature has made me no fool, yet not one action of my life has given any proof of common reason.’

‘Even in the greatest, and most serious affair of life — that of marriage,’ — added she, with a deep sigh, ‘have I not been governed wholly by caprice! — I rejected Mr. Truworth, only because I thought I did not love him enough, yet gave myself to Mr. Munden, whom at that time I did not love at all, and who has since, alas, taken little care to cultivate that affection I have laboured to feel for him.’

In summing up this charge against herself, she found that all her faults, and her misfortunes had
been

seen owing either to an excess of vanity; — a mistaken pride, — or a false delicacy: — the two former appeared now too contemptible in her eyes for her not to determine utterly to extirpate. — But the latter she found less reason to correct, since it happened only in regard to Mr. Truworth, and could never happen again, as both their marriages had put a total end to all tender communication between them.

This change in Mrs. Munden's humour, great and sudden as it was, did not however prove a transient one: — every day, every hour confirmed her in it; — and if at any time her natural vivacity made her seem a little pleased on hearing her wit, — her beauty, — or any other perfection, or accomplishment, too lavishly extolled, she presently checked herself for it, and assumed a look of reserve, which though less haughty than she had sometimes put on upon different occasions, had not the less effect, and seldom failed to awe the flatterer into silence, a proof of which the reader will immediately be presented with.

C H A P. XXXVII.

Contains such things as will be pleasing to those, whose candid dispositions interest them in favour of the heroine of this history.

NOTHING so much encourages an unwarrantable passion for a married woman, as to know she has a husband regardless of her charms. — A young gay gentleman, a companion of Mr. Munden's, privy to most of his secrets and partner with him in many a debauch, had seen Mrs. Munden at Miss Airish's, where she still continued to visit.

visit. He had entertained a kind of roving flame for her, which his friendship for her husband could not prevent him from wishing to gratify. But though they often met, he never could get an opportunity of declaring himself; — all he could do was sometimes to whisper in her ear, that she was divinely handsome; — that he adored her; and that he died for her; — and such like stuff, which she was too often accustomed to hear, to take much notice of.

The indifferent opinion, which most men of pleasure, or, in other words, genteel rakes of the town, have of women in general, joined to the too great gaiety he had observed in Mrs. Munden's behaviour, made him imagine there required little more for the gaining her than the making his addresses to her: — the means of speaking to her in private seemed to him the sole difficulty he had to get over, and in order to do so, he wrote to her in the following terms.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

Madam,

‘ A Fine woman would reap little advantage
 ‘ from the charms she is mistress of, if con-
 ‘ fined to the languid embraces of a single posses-
 ‘ sor: — marriage takes off all the poignancy of
 ‘ desire; — a man has no relish for beauties that are
 ‘ always the same and always in his power; those
 ‘ endearments, which would make his happiness,
 ‘ become disgustful to him, by being his duty,
 ‘ and he naturally flies to seek joys yet untasted in
 ‘ the arms of others: — this, fair angel, is the
 ‘ case with us all; — you have too much good sense
 ‘ not to know it, or to expect your husband should
 ‘ vary from his sex in this particular.

‘ Let

‘ Let those unhappy women therefore to whom nature has been niggard of her bounties, pine in an abandoned bed : — you are formed to give, and to receive the most unbounded joys of love ; — to bless, and to be blest with the utmost profusion of extacies unspeakable.

‘ To tell you how infinitely I adore you, and how much I have languished for an opportunity of declaring my passion, would require a volume, instead of a letter ; — besides, my pen would but faintly express the sentiments of my soul ; — they will have more energy when whispered in your ear : — I know such a thing is impossible at your own house, or at any of those where you visit. — Favour me then I beseech you with taking a little walk in the privy garden near the water-side to-morrow about eleven, from which place, if my person and passion be not altogether disagreeable to you, we may adjourn to some other, where I may give you more substantial demonstrations how much I am,

‘ With the utmost sincerity,

‘ DEAR MADAM,

‘ Your eternally devoted

‘ And most faithful admirer.’

P. S. ‘ I do not sign my name for fear of accidents, but flatter myself my eyes have already said enough to inform you who I am.’

If this letter had come but a very small time before it did, ’tis possible that though Mrs. Munden would even then have been highly offended at the presumption, yet her vanity and curiosity might have excited her to give the meeting required in it by the author, though it had only been, as she would then have imagined, merely to see who he was, and laugh at his stupidity for addressing her in that manner.

Not but she had some distant guess at the person,

son, but whether it was him, or any other who had taken this liberty, she now gave herself not the least concern ; — she was only desirous to put an entire stop to those audacious hopes she found he had entertained, and to keep herself from receiving any future solicitations from the same quarter at least.

To send back his letter without any other token of her resentment, and disdain at the contents, she thought would not be sufficient, and her ready wit after a little pause, presented her with a method more efficacious ; — it was this :

She folded up the epistle in the same fashion it was when she received it, and inclosed it in another piece of paper, in which she wrote these lines.

SIR,

‘ **A**S I cannot think any man would be weak
 ‘ enough to dictate an epistle of this nature
 ‘ to the wife of Mr. Munden, I must suppose you
 ‘ made some mistake in the direction, and sent
 ‘ that to me, which was intended for some other
 ‘ woman, whose character it might better agree
 ‘ with.

‘ I must intreat you however to be more careful
 ‘ for the future, for if any such impertinence should
 ‘ a second time arise, I shall think myself obliged
 ‘ to make a confidante of my husband, whose
 ‘ good sense and penetration will doubtless enable
 ‘ him to discover the author, and his spirit and
 ‘ courage instruct him in what manner to resent
 ‘ the affront offered to

‘ His ever faithful

‘ And most affectionate wife,

‘ B. MUNDEN.’

This had all the effect she wish’d it should have : — the beau was ashamed of the fruitless attack he had made ; — wrote to her no more, — avoided her sight as much as possible, and when-
 ever

ever chance brought him into her company, behaved towards her with all the distance and respect imaginable.

This lady, now fully convinced how dangerous it was to be too much admired for her external charms, ceased even to wish they should be taken notice of, and set herself seriously about improving those perfections of the mind, which she was sensible could alone entitle her to the esteem of the virtuous and the wise.

Mr. Munden, who had never been disquieted at the former part of his wife's behaviour, was equally insensible of this alteration in her: — his cares, indeed, were too much taken up for re-establishing himself with his right hon. patron, to give any attention to what pass'd at home.

After much debating within himself, he thought it best to proceed, so as not to let the noble lord imagine he was acquainted with any part of the attempt made upon his wife; — but though he attended his levee as usual, — paid him the same compliments, and seemed rather more obsequious than ever, he had the mortification to find himself very coolly received. — He stood undistinguished in the circle, which constantly waited the motions of that great man, — was scarcely spoke to by him, and then with a kind of an indrawn reserve, which made him justly enough apprehend, that he had little now to hope for from him.

The truth is, he saw through the policy of this dependant; — he could not doubt but Mrs. Munden had told him of the violence he had offered to her; — he was conscious of the baseness of it, but he was not angry with himself for it, though with the person he would have injured, and could not forgive him for the knowledge of his crime, though the other was willing to forgive the crime itself.

The treatment he received at lord **** made him extremely churlish to his wife : — he looked upon her as the primary cause of his misfortune, cursed his marriage with her, and even hated her for the beauties and good qualities, which should have endeared her to him. — Nothing she could say, or do, had the power of pleasing him, so that she stood in need of all her courage and fortitude to enable her to support, with any tolerable degree of patience, the usage she received.

To heighten her misfortune, the late levity of her temper had hindered her from cultivating an acquaintance with any one person, on whose secrecy, sincerity, and sedateness she could enough depend, for the disburthening her mind of those vexations, with which it was sometimes overwhelmed.

But this was a matter of disquiet to her, which she had not long to complain of ; — heaven sent her a consolation, of which she had not the least distant expectation, and restored her to a friend, by whom she had thought herself utterly forsaken, and whom she had not herself scarce thought of for a long time.

Lady Loveit was now but just return'd from the country, where she had continued ever since her marriage with sir Basil. — A famous French milliner being lately arrived from Paris, with abundance of curiosities, her ladyship went to see if there was any thing she should think worth the purchasing. — Mrs. Munden was led by the same curiosity, and it was at this woman's house, that these ladies happened to meet after so long an absence from each other.

Mrs. Munden was a little confused at first sight of her, as bringing to her mind some passages, which it was never in her power to think on with the indifference she wished to do. — They embraced,

braced, however, with a great deal of affection — made each other the usual compliments on the mutual change of their condition, for lady Loveit, by some accident, had heard of Mrs. Munden's marriage.

Though both these ladies were much more taken up with each other than with examining the trifles they came to see, yet neither of them would quit the shop without becoming customers: — lady Loveit perceiving that Mrs. Munden had neither coach, nor chair at the door, after having asked what part of the town she lived in, and finding it was not too much out of her way, desired she would give her leave to set her down in her chariot.

Mrs. Munden readily accepted the offer, and being come to the door of her house, would have persuaded lady Loveit to alight, and come in; but she excused herself, and at the same time gave her a pressing invitation to her house as soon as opportunity permitted. — ‘I know, madam,’ said she smiling, ‘that it is my duty to pay the first visit to your ladyship, — yet as you are here, — I should not stand on that punctilio with you,’ interrupted lady Loveit, with the same good humour, ‘but I expect company at home, and know not but that they already wait for me.’ The other then told her, she would do herself the favour to attend her ladyship in a day or two: and this was all that passed at this first interview.

Mrs. Munden was extremely rejoiced at the opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with this lady, in whom she had not the least room to doubt, but that she should find what she so much wanted, a faithful adviser and an agreeable companion; — they had always loved each other; — there was a great parity of sentiment and principle

ciple between them, and as nothing but their different ways of thinking in point of conduct towards the men, had hindered them from being inseparable friends, that bar being removed by Mrs. Munden's change of temper, and her being now, what lady Loveit always was, no other remained to keep them from communicating their thoughts with the utmost freedom to each other.

The visit promised by Mrs. Munden, was not delayed beyond the time she mentioned; lady Loveit received her without the least reserve, and they soon entered into conversation with the same sprightliness, as before the change of their conditions.

Mrs. Munden had resolved within herself, not to make the least mention of Mr. Trueworth's name, but feeling, notwithstanding, a good deal of impatience to hear something of him, artfully entered into a discourse, which she knew must draw the other in to say something concerning him.

'I need not ask,' said she, 'how you liked the country; it is pretty plain from your continuing there such a length of time, that you found more pleasures at sir Basil's seat, than any you had left behind.' 'The house is well situated indeed,' replied lady Loveit, 'yet I have passed the least part of my time there, since I left London, — nor have we staid away so long entirely through choice, but have in a manner been detained by a succession of accidents altogether unforeseen.'

'It took up six weeks,' continued she, 'to receive the visits, which were every day crowded upon us, from all parts of the country: — this hurry being over, we could do no less than accompany Mr. Wellair and his lady, who had been with us all this while, to their house, where
' we

we stayed about a fortnight ; — after which, sir Basil having promised my brother and sister Truworth, to pass some time with them in Oxford-shire, we crossed the country to that gentleman's fine seat, where, as you may suppose, his arrival was welcomed in much the same manner sir Basil's had been in Staffordshire : — besides all his relations, intimate friends, tenants and dependants, I believe there was scarce a gentleman or lady, twenty miles round, who, did not come to congratulate him on his marriage and return.

‘ For the reception of those guests,’ went she still on, ‘ the generous Mr. Truworth omitted nothing that might testify his joy on the occasion of their coming ; — feasting employed their days, and balls their nights : — but alas ! in the midst of these variegated scenes of pleasure, death — sudden death, snatched away the source of all our joys, and turned the face of gladness into the most poignant grief.

‘ Death, did your ladyship say !’ cried Mrs. Munden, with an extraordinary emotion, ‘ Is then Mr. Truworth dead ?’ ‘ No madam,’ replied the other, wiping away some tears, which the memory of this fatal accident drew from her eyes, ‘ Mr. Truworth lives, and I hope will long do so, to be an honour to his country, and a comfort to all, who are so happy as to know him, — for certainly there never was a man more endued with qualities for universal good ; — but it was his wife, — his amiable wife, that died.’

‘ His wife !’ cried Mrs. Munden, interrupting her second time, ‘ Is he already a widower ?’ ‘ Too soon indeed, he became so,’ answered lady Lovet ; — ‘ scarce three months were elapsed from the day which made her a bride. to that which made
‘ her

‘her a lifeless corpse: — we were altogether
‘with some other company one evening in the
‘turret, which by the help of some large telescopes Mr. Trueworth had placed there, commands the prospect of three countries at once,
‘when my poor sister was seized suddenly ill; —
‘as she was supposed to be pregnant, her complaint,
‘at first, was taken no other notice of, than to occasion
‘on some pleasantries, which new-married women
‘must expect to bear; — but she soon grew visibly worse, — was obliged to be carried down
‘stairs, and put directly into bed; the next morning she discovered some symptoms of a fever,
‘but it proved no more than the forerunner of the
‘small-pox, of which distemper she died, before
‘her danger was apprehended, even by the physician.’

‘How I pity both the living and the dead,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘Mr. Trueworth certainly could not support so great a loss, with any degree of moderation?’ — ‘The shock at first,’ replied lady Loveit, ‘was as much as all his philosophy and strength of reason could enable him to combat with: — sir Basil, though deeply affected for the loss of so amiable a sister, was obliged to conceal his own sorrows, the better to alleviate those he saw him in, and this kept us for two whole months at his house after the ceremony of the funeral was over. We had then prevailed on him to return with us to London; every thing was prepared for our departure, when an unlucky accident happened to myself, which detained us for yet a considerable time longer.’

‘We were diverting ourselves one day with angling,’ continued she, ‘when in endeavouring to cast my rod at too great a distance, I stooped so far over the bank, that I plunged all at once, head foremost, into the water: — the pond, it seems,

‘ seems, was pretty deep, and I was in some danger ; — fir Basil and Mr. Trueworth seeing me fall, jumped in at the same instant, and by their assistance, I was brought safe to shore ; I was immediately carried into the house, stript of my wet garments, and put into a warm bed, but the fright had so great an effect upon me, that it caused an abortion, which as I was then in the fifth month of my pregnancy, had like to have proved fatal to me : — I was close prisoner to my chamber for several weeks, and on my being just able to leave it, was advised to have recourse, first to the Bristol, and then to the Bath waters, for the better establishment of my health : accordingly we went to both those places, stayed as long at each as I found needful for the purpose that brought me thither, and on my perfect recovery, fir Basil having some business at his estate, returned to Staffordshire ; — made a short excursion to Mrs. Wellair’s, and then we bowled up to London.

‘ This,’ added she, is the whole history of my eleven months absence ; — I should only have told you, that we had not Mr. Trueworth’s company in our last ramble ; — one of the members for his county having vacated his seat by accepting an employment, Mr. Trueworth was prevailed upon, by a great number of gentlemen and freeholders, to oppose his being re-chosen, by setting up for a candidate himself ; — the election was to come on in a few days after our departure, and we have since heard that he succeeded in his attempt.’

‘ Lady Loveit having finished her long narrative, and received the compliments of Mrs. Munden for the trouble she had given herself, was beginning to ask some questions concerning her own affairs, but some ladies coming in, broke off, for the present,

sent, all conversation on this head, and Mrs. Munden soon after took leave, tho' not without receiving an assurance from the other, of having her visit returned in a short time.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Presents the reader, among many other particulars, with a full, tho' as concise, an account, as can be given, of the real quality and condition of the lady, that Mrs. Munden had seen, and been so much charmed with at the mercer's.

MRS. Munden carried enough home with her from lady Loveit's, to employ her mind for that whole night at least; — what she had been told in relation to the death of Mrs. Truworth, raised a strange contrariety of ideas in her, which it was impossible for her either to reconcile or oblige either the one or the other totally to subside.

She thought it great pity, that so virtuous, so beautiful, and so accomplish'd a young lady, as she had been told Mrs. Truworth was, should thus early be snatch'd away from all the joys of love and life, but could not lament so melancholy an incident, in a manner she was sensible it deserved: — envy had ever been a stranger to her breast, yet since her own marriage, and that of Mr. Truworth with his lady, she had sometimes been tempted to accuse heaven of partiality, in making so wide a difference in their fates: — and though the blame of her misfortunes lay wholly on herself, had been apt to imagine, that she had only been impelled by an unavoidable impulse, to act as she had done, and was fated by an invincible necessity, to be the enemy of her own happiness.

Thus did this fair predestinarian reason within herself, whenever the ill usage of Mr. Munden made

made her reflect on the generosity of Mr. Truworth : — she repined not at the felicities, she supposed were enjoyed by Mrs. Truworth, but regretted that her own lot had been cast so vastly different.

But though all these little heart-burnings now ceased, by the death of that so lately happy lady, and even common humanity demanded the tribute of compassion for her destiny, of which none had a greater share, on other occasions, than Mrs. Munden, yet could she not on this pay it without some interruptions from a contrary emotion ; — in these moments, if it may be said she grieved at all, it was more because she knew, that Mr. Truworth was grieved, than for the cause that made him so.

Her good sense, her justice, and her good nature, however, gave an immediate check to such sentiments, whenever she found them rising in her, but her utmost efforts could not wholly subdue them : — there was a secret something in her heart, which she would never allow herself to think she was posselt of, that in spite of all she could do, diffused an involuntary satisfaction at the knowledge, that Mr. Truworth was a widower.

If lady Loveit could have foreseen the commotions her discourse raised in the breast of her fair friend, she would certainly never have entertained her with it, but she so little suspected her having any tenderness for Mr. Truworth, that she observed not the changes in her countenance, when she mentioned that gentleman, as she afterwards frequently did, on many occasions, in the course of the visits to each other ; — nor could Mrs. Munden, being ignorant herself of the real cause of the agitations she was in, make her ladyship a confidant in this, as she did in all her
other

other affairs, — the little happiness she enjoyed in marriage not excepted.

Lady Loveit had indeed a pretty right idea of her misfortune in this point, before she heard it from herself: — sir Basil, tho' not at all conversant with Mr. Munden, was well acquainted with his character, and manner of behaviour, and the account he gave of both to her on being told to whom he was married, left her no room to doubt how disagreeable a situation the wife of such a husband must be in: — she heartily commiserated her hard fate; — yet, as lady Trusty had done, said every thing to persuade her to bear it with a becoming patience.

Perceiving she had lost some part of her vivacity, and would frequently fall into very melancholly musings, sir Basil himself, now fully convinced of her merit, and good qualities, added his endeavours to those of his amiable consort for the exhilarating her spirits: — they would needs have her make one in every party of pleasure, either formed by themselves, or wherein they had a share, and obliged her to come as often to their house as she could do without giving offence to her domestic tyrant.

An excess of gaiety when curbed, is apt to degenerate into its contrary extremity: — it must therefore be confess'd that few things could have been more lucky for Mrs. Munden than this event, — she had lost all relish for the conversation of the Miss Airishes, and those other giddy creatures, which had composed the greatest part of her acquaintance, and too much solitude might have brought on a gloominess of temper, equally uneasy to herself, and to those about her, but the society of those worthy friends, — the diversions they prepared for her, and the company to which they introduced her, kept up her native

tive liveliness of mind, and at the same time convinced her, that pleasure was no enemy to virtue, or to reputation, when partook with persons of honour and discretion.

She had been with them one evening, when the satisfaction she took in their conversation, the pressures they made to detain her, joined to the knowledge, that there was no danger of Mr. Munden's being uneasy at her absence, he seldom coming home till towards day-break, engaged her to stay till the night was pretty far advanced, yet late as it was, she was presented with an adventure of as odd a kind, as ever she had been surprized with.

She was undressing, in order to go to bed, when she heard a very loud knocking at the street-door, after which her footman came up, and told her, that a woman was below, who said she must speak with her immediately. — 'I shall speak to no body at this time of the night,' said Mrs. Munden, 'therefore go down and tell her so.' — The fellow went, but returned in a moment or two, and told her, that the person would take no denial, nor would go out of the house without seeing her. — 'Some very impudent creature, sure,' said Mrs. Munden, — 'but do you go,' added she in the same breath, to the maid that waited on her, 'and ask her name and business, — if she will tell neither, let her be turned out of the house.'

She was in a good deal of perplexity, to think who should enquire for her at that late hour, when the servant she had sent to examine into the matter, came back, and before she had well entered the chamber, cried out, — 'Lord, madam, I never was so astonished in my life! I wonder Tom could speak in such a rude manner; — the woman, as he called her, is a very fine lady, I am sure, though she has no hoop, nor stays on,

‘—nothing but a fine rich brocade wrapping gown upon her:—she looks, as if she was just going to bed, or rather coming out of bed, for her head cloaths are in great disorder, and her hair all about her ears.’

‘Well, but her name and business,’ demanded Mrs. Munden, hastily. ‘Nay, madam,’ replied the maid, ‘she will tell neither, but to yourself; so pray, dear madam, either come down stairs, or let her be brought up,—I am sure she does not look as if she would do you any hurt.’

Mrs. Munden paused a little on what she had heard, and believing there must be something very extraordinary, indeed, both in the person, and the visit, resolved to be convinced of the truth, therefore, having given a strict charge, that both the footmen should be ready at her call, in case there should be any occasion for them, went into the dining room, and ordered that the person who enquired for her, should be introduced.

Her whole appearance answered exactly to the description that had been given of her by the maid, but it was her face which most alarmed Mrs. Munden, as being positive she had seen it before, though when, or where, she could not at that instant recollect.

But the stranger soon eased her of the suspense she was in, when throwing herself at her feet, and bursting into a flood of tears, ‘you once offered me your friendship, madam,’ said she, — ‘a consciousness of my own unworthiness, made me refuse that honour, but now I come to implore your compassion, and charitable protection. — I have no hope, of safety, or of shelter, but in your goodness and generosity.’

The accents of her voice now discovered her to be no other, than the lady Mrs. Munden had seen at the mercer’s: — she was strangely confounded,

founded, but not so much as to hinder her from raising the distressed fair one, with the greatest civility, and seating her in a chair, — ‘ Though I cannot comprehend, madam,’ answered she, ‘ by what accident you are reduced to address me in these terms, yet you may rely upon my readiness to assist the unfortunate, especially, a person, whom I cannot but look upon, as far from deserving to be so.’

‘ Oh, would to God,’ cried the other, very emphatically, ‘ that my history could preserve that kind opinion in you ; but alas, though I find myself obliged to relate it to you, in order to obtain the protection I intreat, I tremble, lest by doing so, I should forfeit those pretensions to your mercy, which otherwise my sex, and my distress, might justly claim.’

These words were sufficient to have excited the curiosity of a woman, who had less of that propensity in her nature, than Mrs. Munden ; — she told her, that by being made the confidant of her affairs, she should think herself obliged to excuse whatever she found not worthy of her approbation.

‘ Prepare yourself then, madam,’ said her still weeping guest, — ‘ summon all your goodness to forgive the frailties of youth, and inadvertency, and to pity the sad consequences, which sometimes attend the pride of flattered beauty, and vain desire of admiration.’

This expression sunk more deeply in the mind of Mrs. Munden, than the person uttered it, imagined : — she made no reply, however, and the other began the narrative she had promised, in these, or the like terms.

The History of Mademoiselle de Roquelair.

‘ I Need not tell you, madam,’ said she, ‘ that I am not a native of this kingdom, my bad pro-

‘ nunciation of the language, speaks it for me ; —
 ‘ I am, indeed, by birth a Parisian, and daughter
 ‘ of the sieur de Roquelair, a man of some esti-
 ‘ mation in the world.

‘ The great hopes conceived of me in my in-
 ‘ fancy, encouraged him to be almost profuse in
 ‘ the expences of my education ; — no accom-
 ‘ plishment befitting of my sex and rank, was de-
 ‘ nied me ; — in fine, it was easy to see he had
 ‘ an affection for me, above all his other children,
 ‘ and that the partial opinion he had of my person
 ‘ and understanding, made him build the highest
 ‘ expectations on my future fortune.

‘ But alas ! what he intended for my happiness,
 ‘ proved my undoing ; — I had but just attained
 ‘ my fifteenth year of age, when the little beauty
 ‘ I was mistress of, was taken notice of by the
 ‘ duke de M—— as I was walking one evening
 ‘ in the Tuilleries, with a young companion of
 ‘ my own sex : — he past us twice without speak-
 ‘ ing, but at the third turn, accosted us with a
 ‘ gallantry natural to persons of his high rank ; —
 ‘ the praises he bestowed on me, were such as
 ‘ might excuse some vanity in a heart so young
 ‘ and unexperienced as mine then was.

‘ On our leaving the walks, a gentleman of his
 ‘ retinue followed, and as I afterwards was in-
 ‘ formed, enquired who I was, and many other
 ‘ particulars concerning me ; — the next morning
 ‘ being at mass in the church of St. Sulpice, I saw
 ‘ the duke again, and on my coming out, had a
 ‘ letter put into my hands, which as soon as I
 ‘ got to a convenient place, I opened, and found,
 ‘ as I before imagined, from the duke.

‘ After magnifying the power of my wit, my
 ‘ beauty, my fine shape, and a thousand charms,
 ‘ with which his amorous fancy painted me, and
 ‘ protesting with the most solemn imprecations
 ‘ words

‘ words could form, his everlasting adoration of
 ‘ me, he intreated I would meet him at the same
 ‘ place, where he had first seen me, and appointed
 ‘ an hour in which he knew least company would
 ‘ be there.

‘ I was imprudent enough to comply with this
 ‘ request ; — my illustrious lover was there be-
 ‘ fore me, — he saluted me with the utmost
 ‘ transport in his voice and eyes, — led me to a
 ‘ retired part of the walk, — made me the most
 ‘ splendid offers, and endeavoured to persuade
 ‘ me, that being his mistress was a station more
 ‘ respectable, than being the wife of a private
 ‘ gentleman, or even of a little marquis.

‘ I was unprepared to confute the arguments
 ‘ he urged, and to confess the truth, felt but too
 ‘ much satisfaction in hearing him speak ; — my
 ‘ tongue obeyed the dictates of my heart, and
 ‘ told him, that I would be his, — though I can-
 ‘ not say, that I was tempted by any extraordinary
 ‘ liking of his person, but meerly by my ambition
 ‘ of pleasing a prince of the blood royal.

‘ It was agreed between us, that a proper place
 ‘ should be provided for my reception, and I
 ‘ should quit my father’s house entirely, and this
 ‘ was to be accomplished at the end of three days,
 ‘ but before the expiration of that time, a per-
 ‘ son, who had seen me in the Tuilleries, carried
 ‘ home intelligence with what company I had been,
 ‘ and my father, who preferred virtue above
 ‘ grandeur, took all imaginable precautions to
 ‘ prevent my continuing so dangerous an inter-
 ‘ course.

‘ But what cannot the power of gold effect ?
 ‘ — though I was locked up in my chamber, —
 ‘ no letters or messages permitted to be delivered
 ‘ to me, an agent of the duke’s, by a large bribe,
 ‘ corrupted one of the servants, by whose assistance

‘ I got out of the house, when all the rest of the family were asleep, and a chariot waiting for me at the end of the street, carried me to a magnificent hotel, where I found my noble lover, and every thing I could wish, ready to receive me.

‘ Here I lived, for near two whole years, in a pomp which excited the envy, and set me above the scandal of the censorious ; — but at length malice overtook me, — the baseness of those about me accused me to my prince of having wronged his bed ; — he too easily gave credit to their aspersions, and not only withdrew his affection and his favours from me, but cruelly discarded me, without the least provision for my future support.

‘ My father, who would never see me in my exalted state, equally shunned me in my fallen one ; — but at last, through the intercession of some friends, he was prevailed upon to forgive what was past, provided I would leave Paris forever, and spend the remainder of my days in a monastery, — to this, in the distracted condition I then was, yielded, and a convent at Roan was made choice of for my retreat ; — the abbess was wrote to concerning me, and every thing was prepared for my departure, when chance brought me acquainted with Mr. Thoughtless.

‘ You start, madam,’ continued she, perceiving Mrs. Munden looked very much confused, — ‘ but know at once, that I am that very unfortunate woman your brother brought with him from Paris, — who has ever since lived with him, and whom you must have heard of.’

The amazement Mrs. Munden was in, on finding her the mistress of her brother, was such, as would not permit her to make any other reply, than to desire she would go on with what she had farther.

farther to relate, on which, mademoiselle de Roquelair resumed her discourse in this manner.

‘This gentleman,’ said she, ‘was well acquainted with my story, but it did not hinder him from entertaining a passion for me; — he declared it to me; — the aversion I had to a recluse life, — the allurements of the world, and his more persuasive rhetoric, soon won me to yield to his desires: — I made a second elopement; — we embarked together, and came to England, where I have had the command of his family, and lived with him in all things like a wife, except the name. — But fortune, always my enemy, conjured up a spirit of jealousy in him, for my torment at first, and at last for my utter ruin. — His fears of losing me, as he pretended, secluded me from all society, — denied me all the publick diversions of the town, and though I lived amidst the very seat of pleasures, kept me as much a stranger to them, as if I had been a thousand leagues removed; — but oh! this night, this night, madam, has compleated all his too suspicious temper long since threatened. — The poor mercer, at whose house you saw me, came this night to bring a piece of silk I had bespoke of him, — Mr. Thoughtless came home immediately after, and being told who was above with me, flew up stairs, — burst open the door, which by some accident was locked, rushed in with his drawn sword, swearing he would sacrifice us both; — the man to avoid his fury, jumped out of the window into the yard; Mr. Thoughtless ran down the back stairs, in order, I suppose, to make him in that place the victim of his rage: — whether he has effected it, I know not, for trembling at my own danger, I took that opportunity of running directly out of the house, though where to go I knew not: —

‘I had

‘ I had no friend, — no acquaintance, to whom
 ‘ I could apply ; — I found myself all alone in
 ‘ the street, and exposed to insults, even worse
 ‘ than those from which I fled : — my good genius,
 ‘ for so I hope it was, which in that dreadful in-
 ‘ stant, reminded me of you ; — I had heard a
 ‘ high character of your goodness, and was assured
 ‘ of it, even by the little I had seen of you, when
 ‘ you were pleased to think me worthy your no-
 ‘ tice.’

‘ This, madam,’ added she, ‘ has brought me
 ‘ to you, and I once more beseech shelter and pro-
 ‘ tection under your roof, for this night, at least,
 ‘ till I can recollect in what manner I shall dispose
 ‘ of my wretched self.

Though Mrs. Munden was apprehensive this lady had favoured herself too much in the recital she had made, yet she could not think of refusing what she asked : — she ordered a bed to be instantly prepared for her, and having conducted her to the chamber where she was to lie, told her, she would defer till the next morning any farther discourse on the subject they had been talking of, as it was very late, and she expected Mr. Munden home, — so wishing her a good repose, returned to her own apartment, to reflect at more leisure on this strange adventure.

C H A P. XXXIX.

Is less entertaining than some of the former.

THE husband of Mrs. Munden being engaged abroad till his usual hour, she had just time to get into bed before he came home, which she was very glad of, as it prevented him from asking any questions concerning her sitting up so much beyond her custom ; and she was not willing to say
 any

any thing to him of her new guest, till she had talked farther with her, and also examined into the truth of the affair, which brought her thither.

The more she reflected on the account that lady had given of herself, the less reason she found to give credit to some passages in it ; — she could not think that a prince, such as the duke de M—, would on a meer suggestion cast a woman out to misery and beggary, whom he had so passionately loved ; — and yet less could she believe, that her brother, a man not fiery by nature, could have acted in the manner she had represented, without a much greater provocation than what she pretended.

Besides, the mercer bringing home goods so late at night to a customer, and being locked up with her, seemed so inconsistent with innocence, that she could not help being of opinion, that the cause must be bad indeed, which had no better plea for its defence.

It also afforded her a good deal of matter for vexation, that by expressing in such warm terms, the great liking she took of this lady, when they accidentally met at the mercer's, she had encouraged her to make choice of her house for an asylum in her distress, and by this means, rendered herself interested in the concerns of a stranger, who, at the best, it did not well become her to take part with.

But her most alarming apprehensions were in relation to her brother : — she knew not but if irritated to the high degree mademoiselle de Roquelair had described, he might in reality have been guilty of some rash action, which might endanger his reputation, and even his life.

Her mind being thus employed, it is easy to believe sleep had little power over her eyes ; — late as she went to bed, she rose pretty early in
the

the morning, and impatient to know something farther of the transactions of the preceding night, she dispatched a servant to her brother's house under pretence of enquiring after his health, not doubting, but by the answer he would bring, she should be able to form some conjecture, whether any thing of the nature mademoiselle de Roque-lair seemed to apprehend, had really happened or not.

The man returning with intelligence, that Mr. Thoughtless was very well, and not yet stirring, gave her great consolation; — she then went up to the chamber of mademoiselle, and after giving her the usual salutation of the morning, sat down by her bedside, and began to talk to her in this manner.

‘ Madam, said she, I have been considering on
 ‘ your story, and as I sincerely pity the misfortunes
 ‘ to which you have reduced yourself, should be
 ‘ glad to know, by what method you propose to
 ‘ extricate yourself from them, and what farther
 ‘ assistance you require from me, or is in my
 ‘ power to grant, without acting unbecoming of
 ‘ my character.

‘ I should be utterly unworthy, answered the
 other weeping, ‘ of the compassion you have
 ‘ shewn, and even of the life you have preserved,
 ‘ should I entreat any thing of you, that might
 ‘ either injure your reputation, or prejudice the
 ‘ good understanding between you and your bro-
 ‘ ther: — As to my misfortunes, they are, alas!
 ‘ past remedy; — I neither hope, nor shall en-
 ‘ deavour a reconciliation with Mr. Thoughtless;
 ‘ — I have long since been both ashamed, and
 ‘ weary of the errors of my conduct, though I
 ‘ wanted strength of resolution to reform them;
 ‘ but be assured, madam, I have now no other
 ‘ wish

‘ wish than to pass my future life in that only retreat for wretches like myself — a monastery.

Her streaming eyes, — her moving accents, and above all, the seeming contrition she expressed for her faults, raised such a flow of tenderness in the soul of Mrs. Munden, that she resolved from that instant, to do every thing in her power to serve her.

‘ As the religion of your country,’ said she, ‘ and in which you were bred, affords a great number of those safe and sure asylums for persons who have made an ill use of their liberty, you cannot, indeed, do better than to fly to some one of them for refuge from temptations, which you have too much experienced the force of; and if you persevere in this good disposition, I will endeavour to procure the means of rendering you able to accomplish so laudable a desire.

‘ Ah, madam!’ cried mademoiselle de Roquelair, — ‘ it is all I ask of heaven, or you; — the accidents of my life have convinced me, there can be no real happiness without virtue, and that the most certain defence of virtue is religion: — if I could now flatter myself with the means of being received within those sacred walls, from which the fatal love of Mr. Thoughtless drew me, I should think my guardian angel had not quite forsook me.’

On this, the good natured believing Mrs. Munden said many kind things to her, — made her take some refreshment, as she lay in bed, in which she advised her to continue some time, and endeavour to compose herself to sleep, she seeming to stand in need of it very much: — in going out of the chamber, she told her she would return in a few hours, but if she wanted any thing in the mean time, on her ringing a bell by her bed-side, a maid servant would immediately attend upon her. She

She was, indeed, bent to try all possible methods for the accomplishment of what she promised ; — ‘ How guilty soever this unhappy woman is,’ said she within herself, ‘ — my brother, in common justice, ought at least to leave her in the same condition, in which he found her, — she was then going to a nunnery, and it is now his duty to send her to one, for it cannot be expected her father will make a second offer of that sort.’

With these reflections, together with others on the manner in which it would be most proper to address Mr. Thoughtless on this score, was her mind taken up, till the hour she imagined he might be stirring ; — the disturbances, which must necessarily have happened in his family the night before, made her suppose he might lie longer than usual, but she chose rather to wait a while for his rising, than hazard losing the opportunity of speaking to him, by his being gone abroad.

That gentleman had, in fact, passed the most disagreeable night he had ever known : — he had loved Mademoiselle de Roquelair with such an extravagance of fondness, that he had sometimes been even prompted by it to marry her, but the too great warmth of her constitution, and the known inconstancy of her temper, has often deterred him from it, and also made him restrain her from many of those liberties he would otherwise have allowed her ; — he had thought himself no less secure of her person, than she always pretended he was of her heart ; — and now to find all his tenderness for her abused, all his precautions frustrated, might well raise in him passions of the most desperate kind.

The inclinations of this woman were, in reality, too vicious to be bound by any obligations, or withheld from their gratifications, by any of the
methods

methods taken for that purpose : — she loved variety, — she longed for change, without consulting whether the object was suitable or not, — the mercer had a person and address agreeable enough ; he was of an amorous complexion, and readily improved the advances she made him ; he frequently came to her under the pretence of bringing patterns of silks, or other things in his way of trade ; — and all this, as she imagined, without raising any suspicion in the family ; — no interruption happening in their repeated interviews, she sometimes kept him with her till near the hour, in which Mr. Thoughtless usually came home, which was seldom till one or two o'clock.

But on this unlucky night it so fell out, that a very ill run of play, and the loss of all the money he had about him, brought him home much sooner than was his custom ; — a servant being at the door, prevented his knocking, so that the lovers had not the least notice how near he was to them ; — he went directly into his dressing-room, which was backwards on the ground floor, and sat musing for some time — casting up the sums he had lost, — cursing fortune within himself, and protesting never to touch a card, or throw a dice again, when on a sudden he was alarmed with the sound of a man's voice laughing very heartily, — he stamp'd with his foot, and a servant immediately coming up, — ‘ Is there any company above ? ’ demanded he hastily : — ‘ None, sir, but the mercer, that comes to madam with silks,’ replied the man — ‘ A mercer at this time of night,’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, — ‘ how long has he been here ? ’ — ‘ I cannot tell, exactly, sir,’ said he, ‘ but I believe, three or four hours : ’ — ‘ A long visit, and on business too ! ’ resumed Mr. Thoughtless ; and after a

little pause. — ‘Go, continued he, bid Mademoiselle de Roquelair come down to me.’

If this unfaithful woman had been but mistress of artifice enough to have made any one of the family her friend, she would certainly have been told, that Mr. Thoughtless was come home, and her gallant might easily have slipped out of the house, without his knowledge, — but on the contrary, her imperious behaviour towards them, set them all in general against her; — this fellow in particular, whom she had used worse than the rest, rejoiced that his master was likely to find out what he wished him to know, but never durst acquaint him with.

On his going up stairs, he found they were shut in the bed-chamber, and running to his master with this account, — ‘Looked in the chamber,’ said Mr. Thoughtless, starting up! — ‘Yes, sir,’ answered the servant, ‘and nobody would answer, though I knocked two or three times;’ — which by the way, if he did at all, it was too softly for them to hear.

‘Confusion!’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, now worked up to the highest pitch of jealous rage, ‘I’ll try if they will open to me.’ — With these words, he drew his sword, and flew up stairs, burst open the door, and rushed into the room with all the fury of an incensed lion: — the astonished guilty pair had neither thought nor means to escape; — the lover, on the first burst of the door, jumped out of the window into the yard; — mademoiselle run screaming to one corner of the room; — ‘Abandoned woman,’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, ‘your punishment shall be the second course;’ — then followed by his man with lights, ran in pursuit of the person who had injured him.

This unhappy woman not daring to stand the tempest of his rage, when he should return, took
the

the opportunity of his having quitted the chamber, to make her escape, — though at the time she did so, as she had truly told Mrs. Munden, she neither knew where, nor to whom she should apply for refuge.

The mercer, in the mean time, was found by Mr. Thoughtless, but in a condition more exciting pity than revenge; the poor man had broke both his legs with his fall, and was otherwise very much hurt; but on seeing by whom, and in what manner he was approached, the terror of immediate death made him exert all the strength that was left in him, to cry out for pardon; which word he repeated over and over in the most lamentable tone that could be: — Mr. Thoughtless, on this, turned hastily away, bidding his servants raise and carry him into the hall, where a chair being presently brought, he was put into it, and sent home to make the best excuse he could to his wife for the mischief that had happened to him.

Every room was afterwards searched for *mademoiselle de Roquelair*, but she not being found, and a maid servant remembering, that in the midst of the confusion, the street-door had been left open, the flight of that lady was not to be doubted.

Though these disturbances had taken up the greatest part of the night, Mr. Thoughtless was able to enjoy little repose after going to bed, and rose rather sooner than usual; — he was up and dressed, when his sister came, but was a good deal surprized to be told of her being there, as she had never visited him before without a formal invitation.

‘Good morrow, my dear sister,’ said he, as soon as she was introduced, ‘this is a favour quite unexpected; — pray what brings you abroad thus early?’ — ‘You men,’ answered she, ‘who keep such late hours, may well think it

‘early ; but for us women, who live more regularly, it is no wonder to see us breathe the morning air : — but I assure you, I rose somewhat sooner than ordinary to day, on your account ; — ‘ On mine ! — as how pray ? ’ demanded he, ‘ I am come,’ answered she, ‘ to solicit in behalf of a person who has fallen under your displeasure, — mademoiselle de Roquelair.

‘ Mademoiselle de Roquelair ! ’ cried he hastily, interrupting her, ‘ what knowledge have you of that infamous creature ? ’ — she then ingenuously related to him, how they had met by accident at the mercer’s, — the offer she had then made her of her friendship, and how, as she supposed, emboldened by that mistaken encouragement, she had flown to her house for shelter the preceding night : — ‘ You see how dangerous it is,’ said he, ‘ to make friendship at first sight ; but sure the wretch cannot flatter herself with the least distant hope of a reconciliation ? ’

‘ Far be it from me, sir,’ replied Mrs. Munden, very gravely, ‘ to become the negotiator of such a treaty, or even to attempt a vindication of her behaviour, — no, it is your own honour, for which alone I am concerned, and that I think requires you should send her to a monastery, since, as she says, you deprived her of the opportunity of entering into one.

‘ All meer pretence,’ cried he ; ‘ — ’tis true, there was some talk of such a thing, but she has inclinations of a different sort.’ — To which Mrs. Munden replied, ‘ that inclinations, though never so corrupt, might be reformed by reason, adversity, and experience ; — that she hoped her penitence was sincere, and what before was her aversion, was now become her choice.’ — She then urged the request she came upon, in terms so moving and pathetic, that Mr.

Thoughtless,

Thoughtless, irritated as he was, could not withstand the energy of her words: — he told her he would consider on what she had said, and give his answer the next day, but in the mean time desired she would advise her unworthy guest to send for her baggage immediately, saying, he would have nothing in his house, that should remind him of her.

Mrs. Munden pretty well satisfied with having obtained thus much, took her leave, and returned to mademoiselle de Roquelair, with an account of what she had done.

CHAP. XL.

Contains a most shocking instance of infidelity and ingratitude.

MAdemoiselle de Roquelair, on finding how far the good nature of Mrs. Munden had made her interest herself in her behalf, expressed the transports of her gratitude in terms, which gave some pain to the modesty of that lady to receive. — ‘What I have done,’ said she, is to ‘promote the cause of virtue, and I hope my endeavours that way, will not be lost on your account.’ — ‘You are all goodness,’ replied the other, ‘but I blush to think, that being already indebted for so many favours, I must still become your petitioner for more; — though I have lived fifteen months in this town, I am a perfect stranger to the greatest part of it, — quite unacquainted with its customs, and know not where, and in what manner to address myself for lodgings; — in the midst of my distractions, I found shelter under your hospitable roof; — may I presume to flatter myself with the continuance

‘ continuance of that charitable protection, till I receive an answer from Mr. Thoughtless.’

Mrs. Munden paused a little at this request, but thinking it would be cruel in this distress to have recourse to strangers, and to whom she could communicate nothing of her mind, made this reply, — ‘ Though it would be highly inconvenient, madam,’ said she, ‘ for you to remain in my house for any length of time, yet as, in all probability, your affairs will be determined in a few days, I would not have you think of leaving me, till you are prepared to leave the kingdom; — please therefore,’ continued she, ‘ to make an inventory of what things you have at my brother’s, and I will give orders for their being brought directly hither.’

Mademoiselle de Roquelair was beginning to give some fresh testimonies of the sense she had of this last obligation, but Mrs. Munden would not suffer her to proceed, and pointing to a standish that stood upon the table, desired her to write the memorandum she had mentioned; — ‘ Obedience, madam, is better than sacrifice,’ said the other, and immediately did as she was directed; — after which Mrs. Munden went down to give the orders she had promised.

She sent this inventory by her own man, and instructed him to procure persons for bringing thither every thing belonging to mademoiselle de Roquelair; but as this could not be done, and that lady dress’d, before the hour of dining, which was just at hand, she judged it improper she should appear at table, till she could do so with greater decency; — she therefore bid one of the maids prepare something apart, and serve it up to her in her own chamber.

She then began to consider what she should say to Mr. Munden in relation to this affair; — she knew

knew not but he might already be apprized of what had passed, or if even he were not so, she thought it would be impossible to keep her in the house without his privity, — so resolved to be quite open in the affair.

She was right in her conjecture, — mademoiselle de Roquelair had happened to ring the bell for something she wanted ; — Mr. Munden hearing it, and knowing his wife was abroad, asked who was above, and this question occasioned the man, who was then dressing him, to give him an account, as far as was in his power to do, of the last night's accident.

This a little surprized him, yet not enough to keep him from the park, where he constantly walked every day an hour or two before dinner ; but on his return, he immediately interrogated his wife, concerning her new guest : on which she told him, without the least reserve, every circumstance of this transaction : — he listened attentively to what she said, but testified neither any dislike, or approbation of her conduct in this respect : — he said no more to her after she had done speaking, but behaved with the same sullen silence he had always done since her adventure with lord ****, and as soon as dinner was over, went out to pass the remainder of the day, and best part of the night, according to custom.

Mrs. Munden's good nature would not suffer her to go abroad the whole afternoon, — she passed all the hours till bed-time, with mademoiselle de Roquelair, and did every thing in her power, both to comfort her in the affliction she was under, and to fortify her in the good resolution she seemed to have taken : — the next morning she received, as she expected, the following billet from her brother.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

‘ Dear sister,

‘ **I**N compliance with your desires, and to be certain of getting eternally rid of the sight of a woman who has so much abused the kindness I had for her, I consent to grant her request of being enabled to go into a monastery: a friend of mine has great dealings with a merchant at *Bologne*, — I will see him this afternoon, and pay into his hands the sum which I am told is sufficient for that purpose: — if you give yourself the trouble to call on me to-morrow morning, I will give you his order for her receiving it on her arrival. — I cannot think of entering your house, while she is in it, but am always,

‘ Dear sister,

‘ Your affectionate brother,

‘ T. THOUGHTLESS.’

Mrs. Munden having imparted the contents of this epistle to mademoiselle de Roquelair, she seemed as much content, as a person in her circumstances could be; she dined below that day, and Mr. Munden treated her with the same politeness and complaisance he always used towards persons, over whom he had no power.

The next morning did not fail of carrying his fair wife to her brother’s, about the hour, in which she imagined he would expect her, but on the moment of her entance, she had the mortification of being accosted by him in these terms, ‘ My dear sister,’ said he, ‘ I was just going to send to you, to prevent your giving yourself this needless trouble. — The gentleman I went to is out of town, and will not return these two days; so nothing can be done in this woman’s affair till he comes back.’ — She told him she was extremely sorry, ‘ because,’ said she, ‘ delays are sometimes dangerous :

‘dangerous: but I hope my dear brother, no second considerations will make you frustrate the good intentions of this unhappy penitent. — No,’ ‘no,’ cried he, ‘I wish she may persevere in them, as stedfastly as I shall to the promise I have made.’ Satisfied with this assurance, she took her leave, little suspecting, while she was labouring with all her might in this good office, that cruel and ungenerous return, which was about to be made for her compassion.

Mr. Munden had seen mademoiselle de Roquelair no more than once, but that once was sufficient to make him become enamoured; — her beauty fired him, — the known wantonness of her inclinations encouraged him, — he scarce doubted of success, but in case of failure, and if she should even acquaint his wife with his attempt, her character furnished him with the pretence of having made it only to try how far her conversion was sincere.

He therefore hesitated not a moment if he should endeavour the accomplishments of his desires, and for the doing so, no time was to be lost, as she was so suddenly to depart. Mrs. Munden was no sooner gone out, than he went softly up stairs to the chamber of this too lovely and less more virtuous stranger; she was sitting in a pensive posture, leaning her head upon her hand, when he came in, but rose to receive him with that respect, which she thought due from her to the husband of her protectress.

After the salutations of the morning were over, ‘Is it possible,’ cried he, taking one of her hands, and looking earnestly on her face, ‘that such youth, such beauty, charms in such profusion, should be condemned to a cloyster! — no, it can never be, — all the powers of love and pleasure, forbid you to make so unnatural a choice.’

— Transported

— Transported and amazed at hearing him speak in this manner, she could not forbear telling him with her eyes, that her thoughts corresponded with his words, but willing her tongue should preserve the decency of the character she had assumed, at least till he should make a farther declaration of his sentiments ; — ‘ If I were indeed,’ answered she, ‘ all that can be described of beautiful, I could not sure be an offering too amiable for heaven.’

‘ Heaven never gave you these perfections,’ resumed he, ‘ to be concealed in a dark, lonesome cell ; — those melting lips of yours were never formed to kiss the feet of a cold lifeless image, or pour forth oraisons to unhearing saints, but to make blest some warm — some happy he, who knows, and has the power of returning the raptures they bestow.’ — These last words were attended with such vehement and repeated pressures of the lips he praised, as left her no room to doubt the aim of his desires, as did the manner of receiving them, also convince him of his success.

‘ But are you in earnest resolved to be a nun ?’ replied he : ‘ Since fate will have it so,’ replied she, with a deep sigh, and a look so languishing, and so sweet, as pierced his very soul : — ‘ Make me your fate then,’ cried he impatiently, — ‘ be mine, and not all the saints in the kalender shall snatch you from me ;’ — ‘ You are then, you must be my fate,’ said she, returning his embrace with equal eagerness, — ‘ you have the power of fate, and are no less resistless, — henceforth I’ll seek no other heaven, but your love, your breast my altar, and your arms my cell,’

It will be easily supposed, that after this, she refused no liberties he thought fit to take : — nothing but the last favour was wanting to compleat his wishes, and to that he would not venture to proceed,

proceed, for fear of an interruption, but they agreed to meet at the Portuguese ambassador's chapel at six o'clock that same evening. Mutual kisses and embraces having sealed the covenant, he went down to dress, and left her to compose her countenance against Mrs. Munden's return.

This very wicked woman, who had never any real thoughts of going into a monastery, and only intended to appropriate the money she expected from Mr. Thoughtless, to such uses as might induce some man of fortune to make choice of her for a mistress, now gave herself little pain, whether he granted her request or not, imagining she had found in Mr. Munden all she wished for, or could hope in a gallant.

She affected, however, to Mrs. Munden, to be under some concern for this delay of her intended journey, but said, she would employ the time she staid, in such acts of devotion, as should best prepare her to become a member of that sacred society, which she soon hoped to be among: 'I have not been,' added she, 'for a long time at confession, but I will go this afternoon, and ease my conscience of its load of guilt.'

Thus impiously did she prophane the name of religion, by making it the veil to cover the most shameful depravities of nature. — On the arrival of the appointed hour, with looks of sanctity, and a heart full of impurity, she hastened to the place of rendezvous; the punctual Mr. Munden waited for her at the chapel door, and conducted her where they had all the freedom they could wish of indulging their vicious inclinations.

They broke off this first amorous intercourse much sooner than either of them desired; mademoiselle de Roquelair not being able to find a plausible excuse to make to Mrs. Munden for staying beyond the time, which her pretended devotions

votions might be reasonably supposed to take up; but to atone for this misfortune, a stratagem was contrived between them, not only for their meeting next day, but also for their continuing together a much longer time, — it was this.

She told Mrs. Munden, that the reverend father, to whom she had confessed, informed her, that a young lady of a very worthy family in England, having passed her year of probation at a monastery at Bologne, and returned hither only to take an eternal leave of her friends, and of the world, was now just ready to go back, in order to be initiated: — ‘To this family,’ added she, ‘the good father has offered to introduce me to-morrow, and if the young lady approves of my being the companion of her voyage, as he assures me she certainly will, how happy shall I think myself.’

The truth of all this not being suspected by Mrs. Munden, she congratulated her upon it; it is easy to deceive the innocent, — but it must be owned, this wicked woman had subtilty enough to have imposed on a person more skilled in the artifices of the world, than was the amiable lady on whom she practised it.

But not to detain the reader’s attention on so ungrateful a subject, I shall only say, that one assignation was still productive of another, and the credulity of the injured wife served only as a matter of mirth to the transgressing husband, and his guilty partner.

But now the time was come when these subterfuges must necessarily be at an end, or become too gross not to be seen thro’. Mr. Thoughtless had seen his friend, — had paid the money into his hands, and received a bill from him on the merchant at Bologne; when he delivered it to Mrs. Munden, — ‘Sister,’ said he, ‘this paper will entitle your guest to the receipt of three hundred louis-d’ors,

‘ Louis-d’ors, on her arrival at Bologne, but I expect you will oblige her to depart immediately, for it is neither consistent with your reputation to keep her in your house, nor with my peace of mind, that she should continue in the kingdom.’ To which she replied with a smile, ‘ That there was nothing more certain than that his commands, in this point would be punctually obeyed.’

This lady was rejoiced at having accomplished what she thought so good a work ; but having perceived in mademoiselle de Roquelair some abatement of her first eagerness for a religious life, she thought proper on giving her the bill to repeat to her the words her brother had said on that account ; to which the other coolly answered, ‘ Your brother, madam, need be under no apprehensions of my offending him in this point, or giving you any farther trouble.’

This, though no more than what the lovers expected, was yet a dreadful shock to them both : great part of the time they were together that evening, was taken up in talking of it ; mademoiselle de Roquelair protested, that death was less cruel than being torn from her dear Munden thus early, — thus in the infancy of their happiness ; and gave some hints, that she wished he would hire private lodgings for her ; but she knew little of the temper of the man she had to deal with : — he loved her as a mistress, but hated the expence of keeping her as a mistress, he therefore evaded all discourse on that head, and told her that he fancied that by pretences, such as already had been made, she might still continue in the house, — ‘ means at least,’ said he, ‘ may be found out to protract our mutual misfortune, and give us more time to consider what we have to do.’

She agreed, however, to make the experiment, and poor Mrs. Munden was imposed upon by some

new invention from one day to another, for upwards of a week, but at last beginning to fear there was something more at the bottom of these delays than was pretended, and her brother having sent twice in that time, to know if his desires had been complied with, she resolved at once to put a period to inconveniencies, which she thought she could so easily get rid of.

Mademoiselle de Roquelair having stayed abroad extremely late one night, she took the opportunity of her having done so, of speaking more plainly to her than her good nature and complaisance had hitherto permitted her to do;—she went up to her chamber next morning, and with an air which had something of severity in it, — ‘ You keep odd hours, madam,’ said she, ‘ for a person who affects to be so great a penitent : but I suppose you are now prepared to ease me of all concern on your account : — ‘ I shall trouble you no longer,’ cried the other, ‘ till the young lady I told you of is ready to depart.’ — ‘ You will do well,’ resumed Mrs. Munden, ‘ to remain with her till she is so, for, madam, I must insist on your removal hence this day.’ — ‘ You will not turn me out of doors?’ cried mademoiselle de Roquelair. — ‘ I hope you will not oblige me to an act, so contrary to my nature,’ replied Mrs. Munden. — ‘ Say rather contrary to your power,’ returned that audacious woman, and coming up to her with the most unparalleled assurance, ‘ This house, which you forbid me,’ pursued she, ‘ I think Mr. Munden is the master of, and I shall therefore continue in it till my convenience calls me from it, or he shall tell me I am no longer welcome.’

Impossible is it to describe, and difficult even to conceive Mrs. Munden’s astonishment at these words : — to hear a woman thus doubly loaded with

with guilt and obligations, — a woman, who but a few days past had been prostrate at her feet, imploring pity and protection, now all at once ungratefully contemning the benefits she had received, and insolently defying the authority to which she had flown for shelter; — all this must certainly give a shock almost beyond the strength of human reason to sustain. — ‘Mr. Munden,’ cried the injured fair one, with a voice hardly intelligible, ‘Mr. Munden!’ she could utter no more, but flew down stairs with such rapidity that her feet scarce touched the steps.

Mr. Munden was not quite ready to go out, — she found him in his dressing-room, and throwing herself into a chair, half suffocated with passion, related to him, as well as she was able, the manner in which she had been treated; to which he replied, with a good deal of peevishness, ‘Prithee do not trouble me with these idle stories, — Mademoiselle de Roquelair is your guest, — I have no concern in your little quarrels.’ — ‘I hope,’ said she, ‘you will do me that justice which every wife has a right to expect, and convince that French hypocrite, that I am too much the mistress of this house for any one to remain in it without my permission.’ — ‘So you would make me the dupe of your resentment,’ resumed he scornfully, ‘but positively I shall not do a rude thing to oblige you, or any body else.’ — In speaking these words, having now adjusted his dress, he flung out of the room, without giving her time to add any thing farther on a subject he was wholly unprepared to answer.

What perplexing whirl of wild imaginations must such a behaviour from a husband excite in a wife, conscious of having done nothing to provoke it: — happy was it for her that love had the least

share in her resentment; — all her indifference could not enable her to support, with any degree of patience, so palpable a contempt; — she returned directly to her own chamber, where shutting herself up, she gave a loose to agitations too violent for words to represent.

C H A P. XLI.

Relates such things as the reader will doubtless think of very great importance, yet will hereafter be found of much greater than he can at present imagine.

AFTER this much-injured wife had vented some part of the overflowing passions of her soul in tears and exclamations, she began to consider with more calmness, in what manner she ought to behave in so amazing a circumstance. — She had not the least propensity in her nature to jealousy, yet she could not think that any thing less than a criminal correspondence between her husband and this French woman, could induce the one, or embolden the other, to act as they had done towards her.

‘Neither divine, nor human laws,’ said she, ‘nor any of those obligations by which I have hitherto looked upon myself as bound, can now compel me any longer to endure the cold neglects, the insults, the tyranny of this most ungrateful, — most perfidious man. — I have discharged the duties of my station; I have fully proved I know how to be a good wife, if he had known how to be even a tolerable husband: wherefore then should I hesitate to take the opportunity, which this last act of baseness gives me, of easing myself of that heavy yoke I have laboured under for so many cruel months.’

She

She would not, however, do any thing precipitately; it was not sufficient she thought, that she should be justified to herself; she was willing also to be justified in the opinion of her friends: her brother was the first person to be consulted, she resolved therefore to go immediately to him, but as it was necessary to put some things in order before her departure, in case she should return no more, she called the maid, who always waited on her in her chamber, to assist her on this occasion.

She locked up her jewels, and what other trinkets she had of value in an amber cabinet, and made her wearing apparel be also disposed of in proper utensils, leaving out only some linnen, and other necessities for the present use, which she also caused to be pack'd up. — The poor maid, who loved her mistress dearly, and easily guessed the meaning of these preparations, could not refrain weeping all the time she was thus employed; — ‘Ah, madam,’ cried she, ‘what a sad thing it is that married gentlemen will be so foolish! — hang all the French, I say.’ — ‘What do’st mean, Jenny,’ said Mrs. Munden? — ‘ah, madam,’ replied she, ‘I should have told you before, but that I was afraid of making you uneasy; but since I find you know how things are, I shall make no secret of it: — you may remember, madam, that you gave me leave last monday to go to see my sister, — she lives in St. Martin’s lane, — it would have been nearer for me, indeed, to have gone through the Mews, but I know not how it happened, I went by Charing-Cross, and just as I was going to cross the way, who should I see pop out of a hackney coach, but my master and this French woman; — they hurried together, arm in arm, into a bagnio, — and you know, madam, some of those places have but an ugly name; — for my part I was so confounded, that I scarce knew

‘ whether I stood upon my my head, or my heels ;
 ‘ but I did not say a word of what I had seen
 ‘ when I came home, till just now John came
 ‘ down, and told us all how that wicked woman
 ‘ had affronted you.’

Mrs. Munden then recollected, that Mr. Munden’s man was in the room, when she related the behaviour of mademoiselle de Roquelair, which she now was not sorry for, nor of the fresh proof given her by this maid of the perfidy of her husband.

‘ Well, Jenny,’ said she, ‘ I am not yet determined how I shall proceed ; — I am going to my brother’s, and shall take Tom with me, — if I do not come back to night, he shall bring you instructions what things to send me ; — but in the mean time, say nothing to your master of what we have been talking.’

Mrs. Munden could not forbear shedding tears as she was going into her chair, at the thoughts of this exile, voluntary as it was, from a house she had so much right to call her own ; but the poor maid roared out so loud at seeing her depart, that it brought all the servants out of the kitchen to know what was the matter, which being told by Jenny, occasioned so general a grief among them, for the loss of so good a mistress, that had mademoiselle de Roquelair remained in the house, and the same servants also been continued, it is possible she would have had little either of respect, or obedience from them.

But fortune spared this mortification, in order to inflict a much greater one on her ingratitude and treachery. — Mr. Munden had not quitted the presence of his wife many minutes before he began to reflect seriously on this accident ; — he found it might prove a very vexatious one if the consequences it seem’d to threaten were not in time

time prevented : — he highly blamed mademoiselle de Roquelair for her behaviour to Mrs. Munden, not so much because it might give that lady room to suspect in what manner he wronged her, as because it plainly shewed, that the other intended to pin herself upon him, and oblige him to support her ; a thing which did not at all suit with his humour : — he had gratified his passion almost to a surfeit ; — a very little longer time would have made him as heartily wish to get rid of her, as ever he had done to gain her ; and though it could not be said he was as yet altogether cloyed with the pleasures she so lavishly bestowed ; yet a little examination into the extent of his inclinations, convinced him, that he could bear the loss of her for ever without pain.

While the blood runs high, and desire is rampant for possession, prudence is of little force ; but when the one begins to flag, the other resumes its empire over the mind, and never rests till it finds means to retrieve what it has lost : — he could now consider, that the money remitted to Bologna by Mr. Thoughtless, could be received by nobody but mademoiselle de Roquelair herself, and that it was probable, that gentleman, if told the usage had been given his sister, might be provoked to recall his order, and prevent the payment of it at all ; — this seemed, however, a plausible pretence for persuading her to go away directly, and also for making a merit to his wife of what he did.

Having fully determined within himself how to proceed in this affair, he shortened his morning's walk, and came home some hours before the usual time : — he was at first a little fretted on being told Mrs. Munden was gone to her brother's, not doubting but the errand on which she went, was to complain of the treatment she had received ;

ceived ; but Jenny carefully concealing what her mistress had said to her, concerning her intentions of coming back no more, he passed it lightly over, imagining her accusations and reproaches would cease, the object of them being once removed.

He found no difficulty in prevailing on mademoiselle de Roquelair to go to Bologne. — Three hundred louis d'ors was too tempting a sum to be forfeited merely for the want of a little jaunt, especially as she considered, that she might accomplish her business there, and return to London within the compass of a very few days, and he told her, that he would hire lodgings for her against her coming back.

‘ Well then, my angel,’ said he, ‘ no time is to be lost ; — as this is not post day, if you set out immediately for Dover, you may be at Bologne, and have received the money before any letter can reach that place to prevent it, for it is very likely that the spite my wife has towards you, may work upon the resentment of her brother to attempt such a thing.’ — Every thing being concluded upon for this expedition, he went himself to procure a post-chaise, appointing her to meet him at a place he mentioned to her in an hour at farthest.

As he promised to send all her baggage to the lodgings which he should provide for her reception, she had nothing to do but to pack up some few necessaries to take with her. This little work being soon over, a hackney coach carried her to the house that had been agreed upon, where she saw a post-chaise already at the door, and the diligent Mr. Munden waiting for her coming : — as she proposed to reach Canterbury that same night, and it was then past two o'clock, the lovers were obliged to take a very hasty leave.

This

This double deceitful man, having a farther view in what he did than she had any notion of, told her at parting, that it would be proper for her to stay at Bologne till she received a letter from him with an account in what street, and part of the town, the lodgings he should provide for her were situated, to the end she might come directly into them on her arrival; — he spoke this with an air so full of tenderness and care for her repose, that she had not the least suspicion of his drift, and replied, that she would not fail to do as he advised, but desired he would be as speedy as possible in writing to her, — ‘for,’ cried she, embracing him, ‘I shall think every day a year till I return to the arms of my dear Munden.’

Having thus in reality discarded his mistress, though without her knowing he had done so, he went home, in order to boast to his wife of the complaisance he had shewn to her in this affair, but finding she was not yet come back, he called for her maid, and bid her tell her the moment she should return, that he had complied with her request, and made the French woman go out of the house.

After having said this, he went out again, and came not home till late at night, when he was confounded beyond measure on finding a letter from Mrs. Munden, which had been left for him by her own footman in the beginning of the evening, and contained these lines.

To Mr. MUNDEN.

‘Sir,

‘**A**S you cannot but be sensible, that the mutual engagements between us have been strictly adhered to on my part, and almost in every particular falsified on your’s, you ought not to be surprised, that I have at last resolved to put a
‘final

‘ final end to a way of life so unpleasing in the
 ‘ eyes of heaven, and so disagreeable to ourselves ;
 ‘ — it never was in my power to make you truly
 ‘ happy, nor in your will to make me even tolera-
 ‘ bly easy ; — I therefore fly for ever from your
 ‘ ill usage, and once more put myself under the
 ‘ protection of my friends, to whom I also shall
 ‘ commit the care of settling with you the terms
 ‘ of our separation, which being once agreed up-
 ‘ on, you will not be troubled either with the
 ‘ complaints, or reproaches, of

‘ Your much injured wife,

‘ B. MUNDEN.

‘ P. S. I have removed nothing out of your house
 ‘ but what was my own before marriage.’

Upon enquiring farther into the matter he was informed that Mrs. Munden had indeed removed a large India chest, a bureau cabinet dressing-table, and in fine, every thing that belonged immediately to herself, and also that his family was now reduced to two, her own man and maid having followed her.

All this convincing him how much she was in earnest, involved him in the most perplexing cogitations ; — not that he regretted the parting with her through any remains of affection, or that his harden’d heart was touched with a just sensibility of her merit, or with any repentance of his ill treatment of her, but that he knew such an affair must necessarily be attended with some noise and confusion, and in many respects give him a good deal of embarrassment : — it was therefore these two last reasons, which alone determined him to make use of all his artifice to bring about a second reconciliation.

That beautiful lady in the mean time had thoughts much more composed ; — her brother had received her in the most affectionate manner, —
 had

had approved of her conduct in regard to her unfaithful husband, — had assured her of the continuance of his friendship and protection, and before she could request it of him, invited her, and such of her servants as she chose should attend her, to remain in his house as long as she should think fit. — He desired her to take upon her the sole command and management of his house and family, and assigned the best apartment for her particular use: — in fine he omitted nothing that might convince her of a sincere welcome.

On discoursing together concerning her obtaining a separate maintenance, it was the opinion of them both, that Mr. Markland the lawyer should be advised with, as he was a man who could not but be well experienced in such affairs, and accordingly a servant was dispatched to that gentleman, to desire he would come to them the next day.

But though she had reason to be highly satisfied with the reception given her by her brother, yet she could not be quite easy till she should hear what judgment her dear lady Loveit would pass on the step she had taken. — She went the next morning to pay a visit at that lady's toilet, — she related to her sincerely every particular of the provocation she had received, the manner in which she had resented it, and the resolution she had taken of living in an eternal state of separation from so bad a man; to which lady Loveit replied, that though she was extremely sorry for the occasion, yet she thought if she had acted otherwise, it would have been an injustice not only to herself, but to all wives in general, by setting them an example of submitting to things required of them neither by law nor nature.

This encouragement, from a lady of her known scrupulous disposition, made Mrs. Munden not doubt but she should be equally absolved by lady
Trusty,

Truſty, and her brother Frank, to both whom ſhe wrote an account that evening of all ſhe had done.

On her return from lady Loveit's, ſhe found a letter from Mr. Munden in answer to that ſhe had ſent to him the day before : — the contents whereof were as follow.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

Madam,

THE unaccountableneſs of your behaviour aſtoniſhes me ! For heaven's ſake, how can you answer to yourſelf the having quitted your husband's houſe for ſo trifling a pretence ? — It is true, I did not at firſt give much regard to your complaint againſt mademoiſelle de Roquelair, but on conſidering it, I obliged her to depart immediately. — I do aſſure you, ſhe ſet out yeſter-day for Dover, and I believe by this time is as far as Calais, on her way to Bologne, ſo that there now remains no excuſe for your abſenting yourſelf, and if you ſhould continue to do ſo, it will be a very plain proof, that you are extremely wanting in that duty and affection, which the laws both of God and man expect from you. — But I flatter myſelf that is not the caſe, and therefore expect you will return with all poſſible expedition to him, who will be always ready to prove himſelf

Your moſt affectionate husband,

G. MUNDEN.

P. S. I know not what you mean by ſettling terms of ſeparation ; — a wife who elopes from her husband, forfeits all claim to every thing that is his, and can expect nothing from him till ſhe returns to her obedience ; but were it otherwiſe, and the law were entirely on your ſide in this point, you might be certain, that I look upon the happineſs of poſſeſſing you in

‘too just a light to be easily brought into any agreement, that would deprive me of you.’

Though Mr. Munden wanted not cunning in most things, yet in writing this epistle he seemed not to consider the spirit, or the penetration of his wife, who, he might have known, had too great a share of both, to be either intimidated by the majestic air of some of the expressions, or soothed by the fawning, unsincere compliments of the others.

This vain attempt therefore only serving to remind her of the many proofs she had received both of his ill nature and deceit towards her, instead of weakening the resolution she had taken of not living with him again, rather rendered it more strong and permanent.

CH A P. XLII.

More of the same.

MR. Markland did not, like too many of his profession, ever flatter his clients with an assurance of success in any cause, of which himself was doubtful: — He plainly told Mrs. Munden, that he feared not all the ill usage she had sustained would be sufficient to compel her husband to allow her a separate maintenance. — ‘Honour and generosity may indeed,’ added he, ‘oblige him to do that, which I am very apprehensive the law will not enforce him to.’

‘Alas,’ cried Mrs. Munden, bursting into tears, ‘if I can have no relief but from his honour and generosity, I must be miserable.’ — ‘Not so, my dear sister,’ said Mr. Thoughtless, ‘while you have a brother, who has it in his power to support you against all the injuries of fortune, and the injustice of a husband so unworthy of you.’

She thanked him in terms which so affectionate an offer demanded from her, but could not help appearing very much dejected at what Mr. Markland had said to her; on which, 'Madam,' said he, 'though the letter of the law may not be altogether so favourable for you in this point, as you certainly deserve, yet notwithstanding that, and how refractory soever Mr. Munden may be in his principles or dispositions, I hope there may be means found to bring him to do you justice; — I will wait on him, — will talk to him in a proper manner, and do flatter myself with being able to give you a good account of what I have done.'

It is not to be doubted but both the brothers and the sister earnestly intreated he would exert all his abilities in an affair, which they easily saw would be difficult enough to manage; but the answers of this honest good natured gentleman soon convinced them, that there was no need of any persuasions to induce him to do every thing in his power for the service of ill-treated innocence.

Mrs. Munden having told him, that about eleven o'clock was the most certain time for her husband to be spoke with, he went the next morning at that hour; on sending up his name, Mr. Munden guessed the errand on which he came, but that did not hinder him from ordering he should be introduced, nor when he was so, from receiving him with that politeness he always used to strangers.

Mr. Markland began with telling him he was extremely sorry for the occasion on which he waited on him that morning, 'I little imagined,' said he, 'that when I drew up the articles for an union between you, sir, and Mrs. Munden, I should ever have been employed in transacting a deed of separation: — but since it has unhappily
' proved

‘proved so, I hope at least it may be done as amicably as the nature of the thing will admit.’

Mr. Munden at first affected to treat this proposal in a manner somewhat ludicrous, but perceiving it was not well taken by the other, — ‘You will pardon me, sir,’ cried he, ‘I protest I am under the greatest consternation in the world, that my wife should have the assurance to trouble a gentleman of your character on so foolish an affair; — upon my honour, sir, there is nothing in it but meer whim, — caprice.’

‘If I did not think it sufficiently serious,’ replied Mr. Markland, ‘and were not also well convinced you will hereafter find it so, I should not have given either myself, or you, the trouble of this visit; — but sir,’ continued he, ‘you may depend, that the lady’s complaints will have their weight.’

‘All womanish spite, upon my soul, sir,’ resumed Mr. Munden; ‘I defy her to accuse me of any one action that can justify her quitting my house, much less to prove any real injury received from me, without which you know, sir, there can be no pretence for a separation.’

‘You cannot as yet, sir, be sensible what is in her power to prove,’ said the lawyer, ‘but God forbid this unhappy dissention should ever come to that, for admitting she should be wanting in such proofs as the strictness of the law requires in these cases, the very attempt must necessarily involve you in an infinity of disquiet. — Consider, sir,’ pursued he, ‘when the affairs of a family are laid open, and every dispute between the husband and the wife exposed before a court of judicature, or even in a petition to a lord chancellor, the whole becomes a public talk, and furnishes a matter of ridicule for the unthinking scoffers of the age.’

‘I can easily prevent all this,’ cried Mr. Munden, hastily, ‘by procuring a warrant from the lord chief justice to force her immediately home.’ — ‘You may certainly do so,’ cried Mr. Markland, with a half smile, — ‘but, sir, are you sure of keeping her at home, when you have got her there? — Is it not in her power to leave you again the same day, — nay, even the same hour in which you compelled her to return? so that your whole time may be spent in an unavailing chase — somewhat of a piece with the fable of the Sisyphæan stone, which as often as the driver forced to the height he aimed at, rolled back to its beloved descent. — In fine, sir, as Mrs. Munden is determined to live apart, you have no way to preserve her but by confinement, and I appeal to your own judgement how that would look in the eyes of the world, and what occasion for complaint it would afford to all her friends, who would doubtless have a strict watch on your behaviour.’

These words threw Mr. Munden into a deep reverie, which the other would not interrupt, being willing to see how far this last remonstrance had worked upon him, till coming out of it, and vexed that he had shewn any discomposure, — ‘Well, sir,’ said he, ‘if she resolves to persist in this obstinacy, let her enjoy her humour, I shall give myself no pain about it, — but she must not expect I shall allow one penny towards her maintenance.’

It was on this head, that Mr. Markland found he had occasion to employ all the rhetoric he was master of: — he urged the unreasonableness, the injustice, the cruelty of denying the means of subsistence to a lady whose whole fortune he enjoyed; — said, such a thing was altogether unprecedented among persons of condition; and to prove what he alledged, produced many instances of wives, who

who on parting from their husbands, were allowed a provision proportionable to the sums they had brought in marriage.

All these arguments were enforced in terms so strong, and so pathetic, that Mr. Munden could make no other answer than, — that he did not desire to part, that it was her own fault, and that if she would not return to her duty, she ought to be starved into a more just sense of it; and that he was very sure the law would not compel him to do any thing for her; on which, Mr. Markland again reminded him of the vexation, the fatigue, the disgrace, with which a suit commenced by either party must be attended, in whose favour soever the decision should be made.

He talked so long on this subject, that Mr. Munden, either to get rid of him, or because he was really uncertain what to do, at last told him, that he would consider on what he had been saying, and let him know his resolution in a week's time. — Mr. Markland then replied, that he would trouble him no farther for the present, and after having prefixed a day for waiting on him again, took his leave.

The Mind of Mr. Munden was indeed in the utmost confusion amidst that variety of vexatious incidents which he had now to struggle with, — the little probability he found there was of re-establishing himself in the favour of his patron, — the loss of all his hopes that way, — the sudden departure of a wife, whom, tho' he had no affection for, he looked upon as a necessary appendix to his house, — the noise her having taken such a step would make in the town, the apprehensions of being obliged to grant her a separate maintenance, all these things put together, it is certain were sufficient to overwhelm a man of a less impatient temper.

He cursed his amour with the French woman, as having been the cause of this last misfortune falling on him, and to prevent all farther trouble on her account, ordered, that the luggage she had left behind should be immediately put on board a vessel, and sent after her to Bologne; he also wrote to her at the same time, acquainting her with the disturbance which had happened, and that it was highly necessary for his future peace that he should see her no more, nor even hold any correspondence with her.

Mrs. Munden in the mean time was far from being perfectly easy, though Mr. Markland gave her hopes that her husband would very speedily be brought to settle things between them in a reasonable way, and her brother was every day giving her fresh assurances of his friendship and protection, whether that event proved favourable or not; yet all this was not enough to quell some scruples, which now rose in her mind; — the violence of that passion, which had made her resolve to leave Mr. Munden being a little evaporated, the vows she had made to him at the altar were continually in her thoughts; — she could not quite assure herself, that a breach of that solemn covenant was to be justified by any provocations; nor whether the worst usage on the part of the husband could authorize resentment in that of a wife.

She was one day disburdening her disquiets on this score to her dear lady Loveit, in terms which made that lady see more than ever she had done before, the height of her virtue, and the delicacy of her sentiments, when sir Bazil came hastily into the room with a paper in his hand, and after paying his compliments to Mrs. Munden, ‘My dear,’ said he to his lady, ‘I have very agreeable news to tell you, — I have just received a letter from my brother Trueworth, which informs me,
‘that

‘that he is upon the road, and we shall have him with us this evening.’ — ‘I am extremely glad,’ replied she, ‘and likewise that he is so good to let us know it, that I may make some little preparations for his welcome.’

Mrs. Munden could not be told that Mr. Truworth was so near, and might presently be in the same room with her, without the utmost confusion, which she fearing would be observed, laid hold of the pretence lady Loveit’s last words furnished her with, of taking her leave, and rising hastily up, ‘I will wait on your ladyship,’ said she, ‘at a more convenient time, for I perceive you are now going to be busy.’ — ‘Not at all,’ replied the other, ‘three words will serve for all the instructions I have to give, therefore, prithee, dear creature, sit down.’ — In speaking these words, she took hold of one of her hands; and sir Basil of the other; in order to replace her on the settee she had just quitted, but she resisting their efforts, and desiring to be excused staying any longer, — ‘I protest,’ cried lady Loveit, ‘this sudden resolution of leaving us would make one think you did it to avoid Mr. Truworth, and if that be the case, I must tell you, that you are very ungrateful, as he always expresses the greatest regard for you.’ — ‘Aye, aye,’ said sir Basil, laughing, ‘old love cannot be forgot: I have heard him utter many tender things of the charming Miss Betsy Thoughtless, even since his marriage with my sister.’

‘I ought not then,’ replied she, ‘to increase the number of the obligations I have to him by that compassion, which I know he would bestow on my present distress; but I assure you, sir Basil, I would not quit you, and my dear lady Loveit, thus abruptly, if some letters I have to write, and

‘and other affairs, which require immediate dispatch, did not oblige me to it.’

On this, they would not offer to detain her, and she went home to give a loose to those agitations, which the mention of Mr. Trueworth always involved her in.

CHAP. XLIII.

Affords variety of amusements.

MRS. Munden was so ignorant of her own heart, in relation to what it felt on Mr. Trueworth’s account, that she imagined she had only fled his presence because she could not bear a man who had courted her so long, should see her thus unhappy by the choice she had made of another.

‘I am well assured, cried she, ‘that he has too much generosity to triumph in my misfortune, and too much complaisance to remind me of the cause; — yet would his eyes tacitly reproach my want of judgment, — and mine too might perhaps, in spite of me, confess, as the poet says, that
 “I, like the child, whose folly proved its loss,
 “Refused the gold, and did accept the dross.”

This naturally leading her into some reflections on the merit of Mr. Trueworth, she could not help wondering, by what infatuation she had been governed, when rejecting him, or what was tantamount to rejecting him, treating him in such a manner as might make him despair of being accepted. — ‘What though my heart was insensible of love, said she, my reason, — nay my very pride, might have influenced me to embrace a proposal, which would have rendered me the envy of my own sex, and excited the esteem and veneration of the other.’ — Thinking still more deeply,

deeply, — ‘O God, cried she, with vehemence, to what a height of happiness might I have been raised ! And into what an abyfs of wretchedness am I now plunged ! — Irretrievably undone, married without loving or being loved, lost in my bloom of years to every joy that can make life a blessing.’

Nothing so much sharpens the edge of affliction as a consciousness of having brought it upon ourselves ; to remember that all we could wish for, — all that could make us truly happy, was once in our power to be possessed of, and wantonly shunning the good that heaven and fortune offered, we headlong run into the ills we mourn, renders them doubly grievous.

This being the case with our heroine, how ought all the fair and young to guard against a vanity so fatal to a lady, who but for that one foible, had been the happiest, as she was in all other respects, the most deserving of her sex ! — But to return.

A just sensibility of the errors of her past conduct, joined with some other emotions, which the reader may easily guess at, though she as yet knew not the meaning of herself, gave her but little repose that night ; and pretty early the next morning she received no inconsiderable addition to her perplexities.

The time, in which Mr. Munden had promised to give his answer to the lawyer, was now near expired, yet was he as irresolute as ever : — loth he was to have the affair between him and his wife made public, and equally loth to comply with her demands ; — before he did either, it therefore came into his head to try what effect menaces would produce, and accordingly wrote to her in these terms.

To Mrs. Munden.

‘ Madam,

‘ **T**HOUGH your late behaviour has proved
 ‘ the little affection you have for me, I still
 ‘ retain too much for you to be able to part with
 ‘ you. — No, be assured, I never will forego
 ‘ the right that marriage gives me over you, —
 ‘ will never yield to live a widower while I am
 ‘ a husband, and if you return not within four
 ‘ and twenty hours, shall take such measures as
 ‘ the law directs to force you back to my embra-
 ‘ ces; — by this time to morrow you may expect
 ‘ to have such company at your levee, as you will
 ‘ not be well pleased with, and from whose autho-
 ‘ rity not all your friends can screen you: — but
 ‘ as I am unwilling to expose you, I once more
 ‘ court you to spare yourself this disgrace, and me
 ‘ the pain of inflicting it; — I give you this day
 ‘ to consider on what you have to do, — the fu-
 ‘ ture peace of us both depends on your result, for
 ‘ your own reason ought to inform you, that be-
 ‘ ing brought to me by compulsion, will deserve
 ‘ other sort of treatment than such as you might
 ‘ hope to find on returning of your own accord to

‘ Your much affronted husband,

‘ G. MUNDEN.’

This letter very much alarmed both the sister and the brother, — the former trembled at the thoughts of seeing herself in the hands of the officers of justice, and the latter could not but be uneasy that a disturbance of this kind should happen in his house: — they were just going to send for Mr. Markland to consult him on what was to be done, when that gentleman, whom chance had brought that way, luckily came in: — he found Mr. Thoughtless in great discomposure, and Mrs. Munden almost drown’d in tears. On being informed of the occasion, — ‘ I see no reason,’ said he

he gravely, 'for all this; — I cannot think that Mr. Munden will put in execution what he threatens, at least not till after I have spoke to him again; — I rather think he writes in this manner only to terrify you, madam, into a submission to his will; however,' continued he, after a pretty long pause, 'to be secure from all danger of an affront this way, I think it would be highly proper you should retire to some place, where he may not know where to find you, till I have once more tried how far he may be prevailed upon to do you justice.'

This advice being highly approved of, 'my wife's sister,' resumed he, 'has a very pleasant and commodious house on the bank of the river on the Surry side; — she takes lodgers sometimes, but at present is without, so that if you resolve to be concealed, you cannot find a more convenient retreat, especially as its being so near London, nothing of moment can happen here, but what you may be apprized of in little more than an hour.'

Mrs. Munden testifying as much satisfaction at this proposal as a person in her circumstances could be capable of feeling, Mr. Markland told her, that he was ready to conduct her immediately to the place he mentioned, and her brother adding that he would accompany them, and see his sister safe to her new abode, they all set out together on their little voyage, Mrs. Munden having first given directions to her servants where they should follow her with such things, as she thought would be wanted during her stay there.

On their arrival they found Mr. Markland had spoken very modestly of the place he recommended: the house was pleasant almost beyond description, and rendered much more so by the obliging behaviour of its owner.

They

They all dined together that day, and, on parting, it was agreed, that Mrs. Munden should send her man every morning to town, in order to bring her intelligence of whatever accidents had happen'd, in relation to her affair, on the preceding day.

As much as this lady had been rejoiced at the kind reception she had met with from her brother under her misfortunes, she was now equally pleas'd at being removed for a time from him, not only because she thought herself secure from any insults might be offered by her husband, but also because this private recess seem'd a certain defence against the sight of Mr. Truworth ; — a thing she knew not well how to have avoided in town, without breaking off her acquaintance with lady Loveit.

After the gentlemen were gone, the sister in law of Mr. Markland led her fair guest into the garden, which before she had only a cursory view of ; — she shew'd her among many other things, several curious exotic plants, which she told her she had procured from the nurseries of some persons of condition, to whom she had the honour to be known ; but Mrs. Munden being no great connoisseur that way, did not take much notice of what she said concerning them, till coming to the lower end, she perceived a little wicket gate, — ‘ To where does this lead ? ’ cried she : ‘ I will shew you presently, madam,’ replied the other, and plucking it open, they both entered into a grass walk, hemmed in on each side with trees, which seem'd as old as the creation ; — they had not gone many paces, before an arbour, erected between two of these venerable monuments of antiquity, and overspread with jessamines and honeysuckles, attracted Mrs. Munden's eyes. — ‘ Oh how delightful is this ! ’ said she : — ‘ It would have been much more so, madam, if it had been placed on the other side of the walk,’ said the gentlewoman,

‘woman, ‘and if I live till next spring, will have the position of it altered; — you will presently see my reasons for it,’ continued she, ‘if you please to turn your eyes a little to the right.’ — Mrs. Munden doing as she was desired, had the prospect of a very beautiful garden, decorated with plots of flowers, statues, and trees cut in a most elegant manner. — ‘Does all this belong to you,’ demanded she, somewhat surprized? — ‘No, madam,’ answered the other, ‘but they are part of the same estate, and at present rented by a gentleman of condition, who lives at the next door: — the walk we are in is also common to us both, each having a gate to enter it at pleasure, though indeed they little frequent it, having much finer of their own.’ — With such like chat they beguiled the time till the evening dew reminded them it was best to quit the open air.

Mrs. Munden passed this night in more tranquillity than she had done many preceding ones; — she awoke however much sooner than was her custom, and finding herself less disposed to return to the embraces of sleep than to partake that felicity she heard a thousand chearful birds tuning their little throats in praise of, she rose, and went down into the garden: — the contemplative humour she was in, led her to the arbour she had been so much charmed with the night before; — she threw herself upon the mossy seat, where scenting the fragrancy of the sweets around her, made more delicious by the freshness of the morning’s gale — ‘how delightful — how heavenly,’ said she to herself, ‘is this solitude, how truly preferable to all the noisy giddy pleasures of the tumultuous town, yet how have I despised, and ridiculed the soft serenity of a country life;’ — then recollecting some discourse she formerly had with Mr. Truworth on that subject, ‘I wonder,’

cried she, 'what Mr. Trueworth would say if he knew the change that a little time has wrought in me! he would certainly find me now more deserving of his friendship than ever he could think me of his love;—but he is ignorant—insensible of my real sentiments, and if sir Basil, and lady Loveit, should tell him with what abruptness I fled their house at the news of his approach, I must appear in his eyes the most vain, stupid, thankless creature I once was; but such is my unhappy situation, that I dare not even wish he should discover what passes in my heart; the just sensibility of his amiable qualities, and of the services he has done me, which would once have been meritorious in me to have avowed, would now be highly criminal.'

With these reflections she took Mr. Trueworth's picture, which she always carried about her, and looking on it with the greatest tenderness, 'Tho' I no more must see himself,' said she, 'I may at least be allowed to pay the tribute of my gratitude to this dumb representative of the man to whom I have been so much obliged.'—At this instant, a thousand proofs of love given her by the original of the copy in her hand occurring all at once to her remembrance, tears filled her eyes, and her breast swelled with involuntary sighs.

In this painfully pleasing amusement did she continue for some time, and had doubtless done so much longer, if a sudden rustling among the leaves behind her, had not made her turn her head to see what had occasioned it;—but where are the words that can express the surprize, the wild confusion she was in, when the first glance of her eyes presented her with the sight of the real object, whose image she had been thus tenderly contemplating:—she shrieked, the picture dropped from her hand, the use of all her faculties forsook her,

her, she sunk from the seat where she was sitting, and had certainly quite fainted away, but for the immediate assistance of the person, who had caused these extraordinary emotions.

Her fancy indeed, strong as it was, had formed no visionary appearance: it was the very identical Mr. Trueworth, whom chance had brought to make the discovery of a secret, which of all things in the world he had the least suspicion of.

He was intimately acquainted with the person, to whom the house adjoining to that where Mrs. Munden lodged belonged, and hearing where he was, on his return from Oxfordshire, had come the evening before, intending to pass a day or two with him in this agreeable recess.

As he was never a friend to much sleeping, he rose that morning, and went down into the garden before the greatest part of the family had quitted their beds; he saw Mrs. Munden while at too great a distance to know who she was, yet did her air and motion as she walked, strike him with something, which made him willing to see what sort of face belonged to so genteel a form; — drawing more near, his curiosity was gratified with a sight he little expected: — he was just about to accost her with the salutations of the morning, when she went into the arbour, and seated herself in the manner already described: — the extreme pensiveness of her mind had hindered her from perceiving, that any one was near; but the little covert under which she was placed being open on both sides, he had a full view of every thing she did: — though she was in the most negligent night-dress that could be, she seemed as lovely to him as ever; all his first flames rekindled in his heart, while gazing on her with this uninterrupted freedom, — he longed to speak to her, but durst not, lest by doing so he should be de-

prived of the pleasure he now enjoyed, till observing she had something in her hand, which she seemed to look upon with great attention, and sometimes betrayed agitations he had never seen in her before, he was impatient to discover if possible the motive, — he therefore advanced as gently as he could towards the back of the arbour, which having no wood-work, and the leafy canopy only supported by ozier boughs, placed at a good distance from each other, he had a full opportunity of beholding all that the reader has been told: — but what was his amazement to find it was his own picture! that very picture, which had been taken from the painter's, was the object of her meditations! — he heard her sighs, he saw her lovely hand frequently put up to wipe away the tears that fell from her eyes while looking on it; — he also saw her more than once, though doubtless in those moments not knowing what she did, press the lifeless image to her bosom with the utmost tenderness; — scarce could he give credit to the testimony of his senses, near as he was to her, he even strained his sight to be more sure, and forgetting all the precautions he had taken, thrust himself as far as he was able between the branches of which the arbour was composed.

On perceiving the effect this last action had produced, the gate, though not above twenty paces off, seemed too slow a passage to fly to her relief, and setting his foot upon a pedestal of a statue, quick as thought, or the flash of elemental fire, sprang over the myrtle hedge that parted the garden from the walk, — ‘Ah, madam,’ cried he, catching her in his arms to hinder her from falling, — ‘what has the unhappy Truworth done to render his presence so alarming! — How have I deserved to appear thus dreadful in your eyes!’

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That admirable presence of mind, which Mrs. Munden had shewn on many occasions, did not in this entirely leave her; — the time he was speaking those few words sufficed to enable her to recollect her scattered spirits, and withdrawing herself from the hold he had taken of her, and removing a little farther on the bench as if to give him room to sit, — ‘Sir,’ said she, with a voice pretty well composed, — ‘the obligations I have to you demand other sort of sentiments, than those you seem to accuse me of; — but I thought myself alone, and was not guarded against the surprize of meeting you in this place.’ — ‘I ought indeed,’ replied he, ‘to have been more cautious in my approach, especially as I found you deep in contemplation, which perhaps I have been my own enemy by interrupting.’

Till he spoke in this manner, she was not quite assured how far he had been witness of her behaviour, but what he now said confirming her of what she had but feared before, threw her into a second confusion little inferior to the former; — he saw it, — but saw it without that pity he would have felt had it proceeded from any other motive, and eager to bring her to a more full eclairsissement, — ‘If you really think, madam,’ said he, ‘that you have any obligations to me, you may requite them all by answering sincerely to one question: — Tell me I beseech you,’ continued he, taking up the picture, which she had neither thought nor opportunity to remove from the place where it had fallen, ‘resolve me how this little picture came into your possession?’ What was now the condition of Mrs. Munden! — She could neither find any pretence to evade the truth, nor fit words to confess it, till Mr. Truworth repeating his request, and vowing he would never leave her till she granted it, — ‘What need have

‘I to answer?’ said she, blushing, — ‘you know in what manner it was taken from the painter’s, and the sight of it in my hand is sufficient to inform you of the whole.’

‘Charming declaration — transporting — ravishing to thought,’ cried he, kissing her hand, — ‘Oh had I known it sooner, engaged as I then was to one, who well deserved my love, could I have guessed Miss Betsy Thoughtless was the contriver of that tender fraud, I know not what revolution might have happened in my heart! the empire you had there, was never totally extirpated, and kindness might have regained what cruelty had lost:’ — ‘Do not deceive yourself, sir,’ said she, interrupting him with all the courage she could assume, ‘nor mistake that for love, which was only the effects of mere gratitude.’ These words were accompanied with a look, which once would have struck him with the most submissive awe, but he was now too well acquainted with the sentiments she had for him to be deterred by any other outward shew of coldness; — ‘Call it by what name you please,’ cried he, ‘so you permit me the continuance of it, and vouchsafe me the same favours you bestow on my insensible resemblance.’ — In speaking this, he threw his arms about her waist, not regarding the efforts she made to hinder him, and clasp’d her to his breast with a vehemence, which in all his days of courtship to her he never durst attempt: — ‘Forbear, sir,’ said she, ‘you know I am not at liberty to be entertained with discourses, nor with actions of this nature; — loose me this moment, or be assured all the kind thoughts I had of you, and on which you have too much presumed, will be converted into the extremest hate and detestation.’ — The voice, in which she uttered this menace, convincing

vincing him how much she was in earnest ; he let go his hold, removed some paces from her, and beheld her for some moments with a silent admiration : — ‘ I have obeyed you, madam,’ cried he, with a deep sigh, — ‘ you are all angel, — be all angel still, far be it from me to tempt you from the glorious height you stand in ; yet how unhappy has this interview made me ! — I love you without daring even to wish for a return ; nay so fully has your virtue conquered, that I must love you more for the repulse you have given my too audacious hopes ; — you may at least pity the fate to which I am condemned.’

‘ It would be in vain for me,’ replied she, in a voice somewhat broken by the inward conflict she sustained, ‘ to endeavour to conceal what my inadvertencies have so fully betrayed to you, and you may assure yourself, that I shall think on you with all the tenderness that honour and the duties of my station will admit : — but remember, sir, I am a wife, and being such, ought never to see you more ; — in regard therefore to my reputation and peace of mind, I must intreat you will henceforth avoid my presence, with the same care I will do yours.’

‘ Severe as this injunction is,’ replied he, ‘ my soul avows the justice of it, and I submit.’ — ‘ Farewell then,’ said she, rising from her seat, ‘ oh farewell,’ cried he, and kissed her hand with emotions not to be expressed, ‘ farewell for ever,’ rejoined she, turning hastily away to prevent his seeing the tears, with which her eyes were over-charged, and in that cruel instant overflowed her cheeks : — she advanced with all the speed she could towards the wicket-gate, but when there, could not forbear giving one look behind, and perceiving he had left the walk, and

was proceeding through the garden with folded arms, and a dejected pace, 'Poor Truworth!' cried she, and pursued him with her eyes till he was quite out of sight.

Some readers may perhaps blame Mr. Truworth, as having presumed too far on the discovery of the lady's passion, and others of a contrary way of thinking, laugh at him for being so easily repulsed, but all in general must applaud the conduct of Mrs. Munden; till this dangerous instance she had never had an opportunity of showing the command she had over herself, and as Mr. Estcourt justly says,

'Ne'er let the fair-one boast of virtue proved,
'Till she has well refused the man she truly
loved.'

C H A P. XLIV.

Is less pleasing than the former.

AFTER this solemn parting between Mr. Truworth and Mrs. Munden, that lady's mind was in too much disorder to think what was become of the little picture that had occasioned it, till an hour or two after, the maid of the house came running into the chamber with it in her hand, 'Does this pretty picture belong to you, madam,' said she: — Mrs. Munden started, but soon recovering herself, answered it did, said that it was the picture of her younger brother, and that she believed she might pull it out of her pocket with her handkerchief, or some how or other drop it in the walk. — 'Ay, to be sure it was so,' said the maid, 'for it was there I found it; — as I was going to the pump for some water, I saw something glitter just by the little arbour, on which I run and took it up, but my mistress told me
she

‘ she believed it was yours, for she knew your ladyship was in the walk this morning.’ — ‘ I am glad thou hast found it,’ replied Mrs. Munden, ‘ for it would have vexed me to the heart to have lost it. — ‘ Ay, to be sure, madam,’ cried she, ‘ for it is a sweet picture, your brother is a handsome gentleman, I warrant there are a thousand ladies in love with him.’ — Mrs. Munden could not forbear smiling at the simplicity of the wench, but willing to be rid of her, rewarded her honesty with a crown piece, and dismiss’d her.

She was rejoiced indeed to have this picture once more in her possession, not only because some other might have found, and kept it, but also because she thought she might indulge herself in looking on it, without any breach of that duty, to which she was resolved so strictly to adhere : — To be secure however from a second encounter with the original in that place, she kept close in the house, and stirred not out of it all the time she was there ; — but her apprehensions on this score were needless : — Mr. Truworth religiously observed the promise he had made her, and lest he should be under any temptation to break it while so near her, took leave of his friend that same day, and returned to London, but carried with him sentiments very different from those he had brought down, as will hereafter appear.

As to Mrs. Munden, she found that she had no less occasion for exerting the heroine when alone, than when encircled in the arms of Mr. Truworth : — the accident which had betrayed the secret of her heart to him, had also discovered it to herself. — She was now convinced, that it was something more than esteem, — than friendship, — than gratitude, his merits had inspired her with ; — she was conscious, that while she most resisted the

the

the glowing pressure of his lips, she had felt a guilty pleasure in the touch, which had been near depriving her of doing so, and that though she had resolved never to see him more, it would be very difficult to refrain wishing to be for ever with him.

This she thought so highly criminal in herself, that she ought not to indulge the remembrance of so dear, so dangerous an invader of her duty; yet when she considered, that merely for her sake, and not through the weak resistance she had made, his own honour had nobly triumphed over wild desire in a heart so young, and amorous as his, it increased that love and admiration which she in vain endeavoured to subdue, and she could not help crying out with Calista, in the play,

‘ Oh had I sooner known thy wondrous virtue,

‘ Thy love, thy truth, thou excellent young man,

‘ We might have both been happy.

But to banish as much as possible all those ideas, which her nicety of honour made her tremble at, it was her fixed determination to retire into L—— as soon as she had ended her affairs with her husband, and pass the remainder of her days, where she should never hear the too dear name of Trueworth.

She did not therefore neglect sending her servant to town, but he returned that day, and several succeeding ones without the least intelligence; — no letter nor message from Mr. Munden, having been left for her at her brother’s, on which she began to imagine, that he never had in reality intended to put his threats in execution.

Mr. Markland, in the mean time, had been twice to wait on him, but the servants had told him, that their master was extremely indisposed, and could not be seen: — this he looked upon as
a feint

a feint to put off giving him an answer as he had promised, and both Mr. Thoughtless and his sister were of the same opinion when they heard it. — Mr. Markland went again and again, however, but was still denied access; — near a whole week passing over in this manner, Mrs. Munden grew very uneasy, fearing she should be able to obtain as little justice, as favour from her husband.

But guilty as he had been in other respects, he was intirely innocent in this; — the force of the agitation he had of late sustained, joined to repeated debauches, had over-heated his blood, and thrown him into a very violent fever, in so much that in a few days his life was despaired of: — the whispers of all about him, — the looks of the physician that attended him, and above all what he felt within himself, convincing him of the danger he was in, all his vices, — his excesses now appeared to him such as they truly were, and filled him with a remorse, which he had been but too much addicted to ridicule in others; — in fine, the horrors of approaching dissolution rendered him one of those many examples, which daily verify these words of Mr. Dryden;

‘ Sure there are none but fear a future state ! ’

‘ And when the most obdurate swear they do not,

‘ Their trembling hearts bely their boasting tongues.’

Among the number of those faults, which presented him with the most direful images, that of the ill treatment he had given a wife, who so little deserved it, lay not the least heavy upon his conscience; — he sent his servant to Mr. Thoughtless, at whose house he imagined she still was, to intreat he would prevail on her to see him before he died: — but that gentleman giving a very slight answer, as believing it all artifice, he en-

gaged the apothecary that administered to him, and was known to Mr. Thoughtless, to go on the same errand; on which the brother of Mrs. Munden said, she was not with him at present, but he would send to let her know what had happened; accordingly he dispatched one of his men immediately to her with the following billet.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

‘ Dear sister,

‘ **M**R. Cardiack the apothecary assures me, that your husband is in fact ill, and in extreme danger; — he is very pressing to see you: — I will not pretend to advise you what to do on this occasion, — you are the best judge; I shall only say, that if you think fit to comply with his request, you must be speedy, for it seems it is the opinion of the gentlemen of the faculty, that he is very near his end. I am, dear sister,

‘ Yours affectionately,

‘ T. THOUGHTLESS.’

Not all the indifference she had for the person of Mr. Munden, — not all the resentment his moroseness and ill-nature had excited in her, could hinder her from feeling an extreme shock on hearing his life was in danger; — she sought for no excuses, either to evade, or delay what he desired of her; she went directly to him, equally inclined to do so by her compassion, as she thought herself obliged to do by her duty.

As she entered the chamber she met the apothecary coming out; — in asking him some questions, though she spoke very low, Mr. Munden thought he distinguished her voice, and cried out as loud as he was able, ‘ Is my wife here?’ On which approaching the bed, and gently opening one of the curtains, — ‘ Yes, Mr. Munden,’ replied she, ‘ I am come to offer you all the assistance
‘ in

‘in my power, and am sorry to find you are in any need of it.’ — ‘This is very kind,’ said he, and stretched out one of his hands towards her, which she took between her’s with a great deal of tenderness, ‘I have been much to blame,’ resumed he, ‘I have greatly wronged you, but forgive me, — if I live, I will endeavour to deserve it.’

‘I hope,’ said she, ‘heaven will restore your health, and that we may live together in a manner becoming persons united as we are.’ — ‘Then you will not leave me,’ cried he; ‘Never,’ answered she, ‘unless your behaviour shall convince me you do not desire my stay.’

Here he began to make solemn protestations of future amendment, but his voice failing him through extreme weakness, a deep sigh, and tender pressure of his cheek to her’s as she leaned her head upon the pillow, gave her to understand what more he would have said: — on this she assured him she was ready to believe every thing he would have her, intreated him to compose himself, and endeavour to get a little rest; — ‘in the mean time,’ said she, ‘I will order things so that I may lie in the same room with you, and quit your presence neither night nor day.’

Here he pressed his face close to her’s again, in token of the satisfaction he felt in hearing what she said, and the nurse who attended him that instant, presenting him with some things the physician had ordered should be given him about that hour, joined her entreaties with those of Mrs. Munden, that he would try to sleep, to which he made a sign that he would do so; — and the curtains being drawn, they both retired to the farther end of the room.

As he lay pretty quiet for a considerable time, Mrs. Munden recollected, that there was a thing, which friendship and good manners exacted from

her : — she had wrote the very day before a letter to lady Loveit, acquainting her with the motive, which had obliged her to quit her brother's house, and desiring she would favour her with a visit as soon as convenience would permit, at the place of her retirement. — As she doubted not but the good nature of this lady would prevail on her to comply with her request, she could not dispense with sending her an immediate account of the sudden revolution in her affairs, and the accident which had occasioned this second removal.

She had no sooner dispatched a little billet for this purpose, than the groans of Mr. Munden testifying that he was awake, drew both her and the nurse again to the bedside : — they found him in very great agonies, and without the power of speech ; the doctor and apothecary were sent for in a great hurry, but before either of them came, the unhappy gentleman had breathed his last.

Mrs. Munden had not affected any thing more in this interview than what she really felt ; — her virtue and her compassion had all the effect on her that love has in most others of her sex ; she had been deeply troubled at finding her husband in so deplorable a situation ; the tenderness he had now expressed for her, and his contrition for his past faults, made a great impression on her mind, and the shock of seeing him depart was truly dreadful to her ; — the grief she appeared in was undissembled — the tears she shed unforced ; she withdrew into another room, where shutting herself up for some hours, life, death, and futurity were the subjects of her meditations.

C H A P. XLV.

Contains a very brief account of every material occurrence that happened in regard of our fair widow, during the space of a whole year, with some other particulars of less moment.

MR. Thoughtless was not at home when the news of Mr. Munden's death arrived, but when he was informed of it, he went to his sister, and on finding her much more deeply affected at this accident than he could have imagined, pressed her in the most tender terms to quit that scene of mortality, and return to his house : — the persuasions of a brother, who of late had behaved with so much kindness towards her, prevailed on her to accept of the invitation, and having given some necessary orders in regard to the family, was carried away that same night in a chair with the curtains close drawn.

She saw no company however, till after the funeral; and when that was over, lady Loveit was the first admitted. — As Mrs. Munden was still under a great dejection of spirits, which was visible in her countenance, — ‘ If I did not know you to be the sincerest creature in the world,’ said lady Loveit, ‘ I should take you to be the greatest dissembler in it, — for it would be very difficult for any one less acquainted with you to believe you could be really afflicted at the death of a person, whose life rendered you so unhappy.’

‘ Mistake me not, dear lady Loveit,’ answered she, ‘ I do not pretend to lament the death of Mr. Munden, as it deprives me of his society, or as that of a person with whom I could ever have enjoyed any great share of felicity, even though his life had made good the professions of his last moments ; — but I lament him as one who was

‘ my husband, whom duty forbid me to hate while living, and whom decency requires me to mourn when dead.’

‘ So then,’ cried lady Loveit, ‘ I find you take as much pains to grieve for a bad husband, as those who have the misfortune to lose a good one do, to alleviate their sorrows ; — ‘ but my dear,’ continued she with a more serious air, — ‘ I see no occasion for all this : — I am well assured, that your virtue and the sweetness of your temper enabled you to discharge all the duties of a wife to Mr. Munden while alive, and with that I think you ought to be content : — he is now dead, the covenant between you is dissolved, heaven has released you, and I hope forgiven him, — decency obliges you to wear black, forbids you to appear abroad for a whole month, and at any public place of diversion for a much longer time ; but it does not restrain you from being easy in yourself, and chearful with your friends.’

‘ Your ladyship speaks right,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘ but yet there is a shock in death, which one cannot presently get over. — I grant there is,’ replied lady Loveit, ‘ and if we thought too deeply on it, we should feel all the agonies of that dreadful hour before our time, and become a burden to ourselves and to the world.’

It is certain, indeed, that the surprize and pity for Mr. Munden’s sudden and unexpected fate, had at the first overwhelmed her soul, yet when those emotions were a little evaporated, she rather indulged affliction, because she thought it her duty to do so, than endeavoured any way to combat with it.

It was not therefore very difficult to reason her out of a melancholly, which she had in a manner forced upon herself, and was far from being natural to her, and when once convinced, that she ought

ought to be easy under this stroke of providence became entirely so.

The painful task she had imposed upon her mind being over, more agreeable ideas succeeded: — the remembrance of Mr. Truworth, — his recovered love, — the knowledge he had of hers, and the consideration that now both of them were in a condition to avow their mutual tenderness without a crime, could not but transfuse a sensation more pleasing than she had ever before been capable of experiencing.

In the meantime, that gentleman passed through a variety of emotions on her account, nor will it seem strange he should do so to any one, who casts the least retrospect on his former behaviour; — he had loved her from the first moment he beheld her, and had continued to love her for a long series of time with such an excess of passion, that not all his reason on her ill treatment of him, and her supposed unworthiness, was scarce sufficient to enable him wholly to desist: — a new amour was requisite to divide his wishes; — the fondness and artful blandishments of Miss Flora, served to wean his heart from the once darling object, but there demanded no less than the amiable person, and more amiable temper of Miss Harriot to drive thence an idea so accustomed to preside: — all this however, as it appeared, did not wholly extinguish the first flame; — the innocence of the charming Miss Betsy fully cleared, all the errors of her conduct reformed, rekindled in him an esteem; — the sight of her after so many months absence, made the seemingly dead embers of desire begin to glow, and on the discovery of her sentiments in his favour, burst forth into a blaze: — he was not master of himself in the first rush of so joyous a surprize; he forgot that she was married, — he approached her in

the manner the reader has been already told, and for which he afterwards severely condemned himself, as thinking he ought to be content with knowing she loved him, without putting her modesty to the blush by letting her perceive the discovery he had made.

As lady Loveit, without suspecting the effect which her discourse produced, had been often talking of the ill treatment she received from Mr. Munden, and the necessity she had been under of quitting his house, — the sincere veneration he now had for her, made him sympathize in all the disquiets he was sensible she sustained: — but when he heard this cruel husband was no more, and at the same time was informed in what manner she behaved, both in his last moments, and after his decease, nothing, not even his love, could equal his admiration of her virtue and her prudence.

What would he not now have given to have seen her? but he knew such a thing was utterly impracticable, and to attempt it might lose him all the tenderness she had for him; — his impatience however would not suffer him to seem altogether passive, and unconcerned at an event of so much moment to the happiness of them both, and he resolved to write, but to find terms to express himself so as not to offend either her delicacy, by seeming too presuming, or her tenderness, by a pretended indifference, cost him some pains: but at length he dictated the following billet.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

‘ Madam,

‘ I Send you no compliments of condolance, but
 ‘ I beg you to be assured, that my heart is too
 ‘ deeply interested in every thing that regards you,
 ‘ to be capable of feeling the least satisfaction.
 ‘ while

‘ while yours remains under any inquietude ; —
 ‘ all I wish at present is, that you would believe
 ‘ this truth, which if you do, I know you have too
 ‘ much justice, and too much generosity to lavish
 ‘ all your commiseration on the insensible dead,
 ‘ but will reserve some part for the living, who
 ‘ stand most in need of it : — I dare add no more
 ‘ as yet, than that I am with an esteem, perfect and
 ‘ inviolable, ‘ Madam,

‘ Your most obedient,

‘ Most devoted,

‘ And most faithful servant,

‘ C. TRUËWORTH.’

These few lines perhaps, served more to raise the spirits of Mrs. Munden than all she could receive from any other quarter ; — she nevertheless persevered in maintaining the decorum of her condition, and as she had resolved to retire into L——e in case of a separation from her husband, she thought it most proper to fix her residence in that place in her state of widowhood, at least for the first year of it.

Accordingly she wrote to lady Trusty to acquaint her with her intentions, and received an answer such as she expected, full of praises of her conduct in this point, and the most pressing invitations to come down with all the speed she could.

What little business she had in London was soon dispatched, and all was ready for her quitting it within a month after the death of Mr. Munden : — places for herself and maid were taken in the stage coach, — all her things were packed up, and sent to the inn ; — she thought nothing now remained but to take leave of lady Loveit, whom she expected that same evening, being the last she was to stay in town ; but near as her departure was, fortune in the mean time had contrived an accident,

dent, which put all her fortitude, and presence of mind to as great a trial, as she had ever yet sustained.

Lady Loveit having got a cold, had complained of some little disorder the day before, and though nothing could be more slight than her indisposition, yet as she was pretty far advanced in her pregnancy, the care of her physician, and the tenderness of sir Basil, would not permit her by any means to expose herself to the open air.

Mrs. Munden being informed by a messenger from her of what had happened, found herself under an absolute necessity of waiting on her, as it would have been ridiculous and preposterous, as well as unkind, to have quitted the town for so long a time without taking leave of a friend such as lady Loveit.

She could not think of going there without reflecting at the same time how strong a probability there was of meeting Mr. Truworth; — she knew indeed that he did not live at sir Basil's, having heard he had lately taken a house for himself, but she knew also, that his close connection with that family made him seldom let slip a day without seeing them; — she therefore prepared herself as well as she was able for such an interview, in case it should so happen.

That gentleman had dined there, and on finding lady Loveit was forbid going abroad, and sir Basil unwilling to leave her alone, had consented to stay with them the whole day: — they were at ombre when Mrs. Munden came, but on her entrance threw aside the cards; — lady Loveit received her according to the familiarity between them, and sir Basil with little less freedom, but Mr. Truworth saluted her with a more distant air; — ‘I had not the honour, madam,’ said he, ‘to make you any compliments on either of the
‘ great

‘ great changes you have undergone, but you have always had my best wishes for your prosperity.’

Mrs. Munden, who had pretty well armed herself for this encounter, replied with a voice and countenance tolerably well composed, — ‘ Great changes indeed, sir, have happened to us both in a short space of time.’ — ‘ There has so, madam,’ resumed he, ‘ but may the next you meet with bring with it lasting happiness !’ — She easily comprehended the meaning of these words, but made no answer, being at a loss what to say, which might neither too much embolden, nor wholly discourage the motive, which dictated them.

After this, the conversation turned on various subjects, but chiefly on that of Mrs. Munden’s going out of town : — Mr. Trueworth said little ; — lady Loveit, though she expressed an infinite deal of sorrow for the loss of so amiable a companion, could not forbear applauding her resolution in this point, but sir Basil would fain have been a little pleasant on the occasion, if the grave looks of Mrs. Munden had not put his raillery to silence. — Perceiving the day was near shut in, she rose to take her leave ; it was in vain that they used all imaginable arguments to persuade her to stay supper ; she told them, that as the coach went out so early, it was necessary for her to take some repose, before she entered upon the fatigue of her journey ; — lady Loveit on this allowed the justice of her plea, and said no more.

The parting of these ladies was very moving, they embraced again and again, promised to write frequently to each other, and mingled tears as they exchanged farewells. — Sir Basil, who had really a very high esteem for her, was greatly affected, in spite of the gaiety of his temper, on bidding her adieu, and happy was it for Mrs. Munden, that
the

the concern they both were in hindered them from perceiving that confusion, that distraction of mind, which neither she, nor Mr. Trueworth were able to restrain totally the marks of, as he approached to make her those compliments, which might have been expected on such an occasion, even from a person the most indifferent: his tongue, indeed, uttered no more than words of course, but his lips trembled while saluting her; nor could she in that instant withhold a sigh, which seemed to rend her very heart, — their mutual agitations were in fine too great not to be visible to each other, and left neither of them any room to doubt of the extreme force of the passion from which they sprang.

The motive, which had made her refuse staying supper at sir Basil's, was to prevent Mr. Trueworth from having any pretence to wait upon her home, not being able to answer how far she could support her character, if exposed to the tender things he might possibly address her with on such an opportunity, and she now found by what she had felt on parting with him, how necessary the precaution was that she had taken.

After a night less engrossed by sleep than meditation, she set out for L———e, where she arrived without any ill accident to retard her journey, and was received by sir Ralph and lady Trusty with all those demonstrations of joy, which she had reason to expect from the experienced friendship of those worthy persons.

As this was the place of her nativity, and her father had always lived there in very great estimation, the house of lady Trusty at first was thronged with persons of almost all conditions, who came to pay their compliments to her fair guest; and as no circumstance, no habit could take from her those charms, which nature had bestowed upon her, her beauty and amiable qualities soon became

came the theme of conversation through the whole county.

She was not insensible of the admiration she attracted, but was now far from being elated with it: — all the satisfaction she took out of her dear lady Trusty's company was, in reading some instructive, or entertaining book, and in the letters of those whom she knew to be her sincere friends; but she had not been much above two months in the country before she received one from a quarter whence she had not expected it. — It was from Mr. Trueworth, and contained as follows.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

' Madam,

' I Have the inexpressible pleasure to hear, that
' you are well, by those whom you favour with
' your correspondence; but as they may not think
' any mention of me might be agreeable to you,
' I take the liberty myself to acquaint you that
' I live, and flatter myself, that information is sufficient to make you know, that I only live to be,
' with the most firm attachment,

' Madam,

' Your eternally devoted servant,

' C. TRUEWORTH.'

These few lines assuring her of his love, and at the same time of his respect, by his not presuming once to mention the passion, of which he was possessed, charmed her to a very high degree, and prepared her heart for another, which in a few weeks after he found a pretence for sending to her; — it contained these lines.

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

' Madam,

' I Am now more unhappy than ever; — lady
' Loveit is gone out of town, and I have no opportunity

‘ opportunity of hearing the only sounds can bless
 ‘ my longing ears ; — in pity therefore to my im-
 ‘ patience, vouchsafe to let me know you are
 ‘ in health, — say that you are well, it is all I ask,
 ‘ — one line will cost you little pains, and be no
 ‘ breach of that decorum, to which you so strictly
 ‘ adhere, yet will be a sovereign specific to restore
 ‘ the tranquility of him, who is with an unspeak-
 ‘ able regard,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your unalterable

‘ And devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

Mrs. Munden found this request so reasonable, and withal couched in such respectful terms, that she ought not to refuse compliance with it, and accordingly wrote to him in this manner.

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ Sir,

‘ **T**HE generous concern you express for my
 ‘ welfare, demands a no less grateful return :
 ‘ — as to my health it is no way impaired since
 ‘ I left London, nor can my mind labour under
 ‘ any discomposure, while my friends continue to
 ‘ think kindly of me. I am with all due respect,

‘ Sir,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ B. MUNDEN.’

Upon this obliging answer he ventured to write again, intreating her to allow a correspondence with him by letters while she remained in L—e, urging that this was a favour she could not reasonably deny to any friend, who desired it with the same sincerity she must be convinced he did.

Mrs. Munden paused a little, but finding that neither her virtue, nor her reputation could any way suffer by granting this request, her heart
 would

would not permit her to deny both him and herself so innocent a satisfaction, and by the next post gave him the permission he petitioned for in these words.

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ Sir,

‘ I Should be unjust to myself, as well as ungrateful to the friendship with which you honour me, should I reject any proofs of it that are consistent with my character to receive, and to return: — write, therefore as often as you think proper, and be assured I shall give your letters all the welcome you can wish, provided they contain nothing unsuitable to the present condition of her, who is, as much as you ought to expect, Sir, Yours, &c. B. MUNDEN.’

After this an uninterrupted intercourse of letters continued between them for the whole remainder of the year: — Mr. Truworth was for the most part extremely cautious in what manner he expressed himself, but whenever, as it would sometimes so happen, the warmth of his passion made him transgress the bounds had been prescribed him, she would not seem to understand, because she had no mind to be offended.

Thus equally maintaining that reserve, which she thought the situation she was in demanded, and at the same time indulging the tenderness of her heart for a man, who so well deserved it, she enjoyed that sweet contentment, which true love alone has the power of bestowing.

C H A P. XLVI.

Is the last, and if the author's word may be taken for it, the best.

INNOCENT and pure as the inclinations of Mrs. Munden were, it is highly probable, however, that she was not sorry to see the time arrive, which was to put an end to that cruel constraint her charming lover had been so long under, and while

it gave him leave to declare the whole fervency of the passion he was posselt of, allowed her also to confess her own without a blush.

Mr. Trueworth, who had kept an exact account of the time, contrived it so, that a letter from him should reach her hands the very next day after that, in which she was to throw off her mourning weeds:—it was in these terms he now wrote.

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

Madam,

THE year of my probation is expired;—I have now fully performed the painful penance you enjoined, and you must expect me shortly at your feet, to claim that recompence which my submission has in some measure merited:—you cannot now without an injustice contrary to your nature, forbid me to approach you with my vows of everlasting love, nor any longer restrain my impatient lips from uttering the languishments of my adoring heart, nor can I now content myself with telling you at the distance of so many miles, how very dear you are to me:—no, you must also read the tender declaration in my eyes, and hear it in my sighs;—the laws of tyrant custom have been fulfilled in their most rigorous forms, and those of gentler love may sure demand an equal share in our obedience:—fain would my flattering hopes persuade me, that I shall not find you a too stubborn rebel to that power, to whose authority all nature yields a willing homage, and that my happiness is a thing of some consequence to you:—if I am too presuming, at least forgive me, but let your pen assure me you do so by the return of the post. till when I am, with a mixture of transport and anxiety,

Madam,

Your passionately devoted,

And most faithful adorer,

G. TRUEWORTH.

Though this was no more than Mrs. Munden had expected, it diffused thro' her whole frame a glow of satisfaction, unknown to those who do not love as she did; — she thought indeed, as well as he, that there was now no need of continuing that cruel constraint, she so long had imposed upon herself, and hesitated not if she should acknowledge what he before had not the least cause to doubt; — the terms which she expressed herself in, were these.

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

' Sir,

' I Know there is a great share of impatience in
' the composition of your sex, and wonder not
' at yours: — much less have I any pretence to ac-
' cuse you of presumption, as you are too well ac-
' quainted with the just sensibility I have of your
' merits not to expect all the marks of it that an
' honourable passion can require: — an attempt to
' conceal my heart from you will be in vain; —
' you saw the inmost recesses of it at a time when
' you should most have been a stranger there; —
' but what was then my shame to have discovered,
' is now my glory to avow; and I scruple not to
' confess that whatever makes your happiness
' will confirm mine: — but I must stop here, or
' when I see you I shall have nothing left to add,
' in return for the pains so long a journey will
' cost you; — let no anxieties however render the
' way more tedious, but reflect, that every step will
' bring you still nearer to a place where you may
' be certain of a reception equal to your wishes,
' from her, who is with an unfeigned sincerity,

' Yours, &c. B. MUNDEN.'

This was the first love-letter she had ever wrote; and it must be owned that the passion she was inspired with, had already made her a pretty good proficient that way; — but though the prudish part of the sex may perhaps accuse her of

having confessed too much, yet those of a more reasonable way of thinking, will be far from pronouncing sentence against her; — the person of Mr. Truworth, his admirable endowments, — the services he had done her, might well warrant the tenderness she had for him; — his birth, his estate, his good character, and her own experience of his many virtues, sufficiently authorized her acceptance of his offers; and it would have been only a piece of idle affectation in her, to have gone about to have concealed her regard for a person whom so many reasons induced her to marry, — especially as chance had so long before betrayed to him her inclinations in his favour.

Thus fully justified within herself, and assured of being so hereafter to all her friends, and to the world in general, she indulged the most pleasing ideas of her approaching happiness, without the least mixture of any of those inquietudes, which pride, folly, ill-fortune, or ill humour too frequently excite, to poison all the sweets of love, and imbitter the most tender passion.

As she had not made lady Trusty the confidante of any part of what had passed between her and Mr. Truworth, deterred at first through shame; and afterwards by the uncertainty of his persisting in his addresses, that lady would have been greatly surprized at the extraordinary vivacity, which now on a sudden sparkled in her eyes, if there had not been other motives besides the real one, by which she might account for it.

Mrs. Munden had received intelligence, that lady Loveit was safely delivered of a son and heir, and what was yet more interesting to her, that Mr. Thoughtless was married to a young lady of a large fortune and honourable family; — letters also came from Mr. Francis Thoughtless, acquainting them that he had obtained leave from his colonel to leave the regiment for two whole months,

months, and that after the celebration of his brother's nuptials, he would pass the remainder of his furlow with them in L——e.

These indeed were things which at another time would have highly delighted the mind of Mrs. Munden, but at this, her thoughts were so absorb'd in Mr. Truworth, whom she now every hour expected, that friendship, and even that natural affection which had hitherto been so distinguishable a part of her character, could now boast of but a second place.

Lady Trusty observing her one day in a more than ordinary chearful humour, took that opportunity of discoursing her on a matter, which had been in her head for some time. — 'Mr. Munden has been dead a year,' said she; 'you have paid all that regard to his memory, which could have been expected from you, even for a better husband, and cannot now be blamed for listening to any offers that may be made to your advantage.' — 'Offers, madam!' cried Mrs. Munden, — 'on what score does your ladyship mean?' — 'what others can you suppose,' replied she gravely, 'than those of marriage; — there are two gentlemen who have solicited both sir Ralph and myself, to use our interest with you in their behalf, neither of them are unworthy your consideration; — the one is Mr. Woodland, whom you have frequently seen here; his estate at present, indeed, is no more than eight hundred pound a year, but he has great expectations from a rich uncle — the other is our vicar, who besides two large benefices, has lately had a windfall of near a thousand pounds a year, by the death of his elder brother, and it is the opinion of most people, that he will be made a bishop on the first vacancy.'

'So much the worse, madam,' said the spirituous Mrs. Munden; 'for if he takes the due care he ought to do of his diocess, he will have little

‘time to think of his wife: — as to Mr. Woodland, indeed, I have but one objection to make, but that is a main one; — I do not like him, and am well assured I never can: — I therefore beg your ladyship,’ continued she with an air both serious and disdainful, ‘to advise them to desist all thoughts of me, on the account you mention, and to let them know I did not come to L——e to get a husband, but to avoid all impertinent proposals of that kind.’

‘It is not in L——e,’ replied lady Trusty, a little piqued at these last words, ‘but in London you are to expect proposals, deserving this contempt; — here are no false glosses to deceive or impose on the understanding; — here are no pretenders to birth, or to estate, every one is known for what he really is, and none will presume to make his addresses to a woman without a consciousness of being qualified to receive the approbation of her friends.’

‘I will not dispute with your ladyship in this point,’ replied Mrs. Munden, — ‘I grant there is less artifice in the country than the town, and should scarce make choice of a man that has been bred, and chuses to reside always in the latter; — but, madam, it is not the place of nativity, nor the birth, nor the estate, — but the person, and the temper of the man can make me truly happy; — I shall always pay a just regard to the advice of my friends, and particularly to your ladyship; but as I have been once a sacrifice to their persuasions, I hope you will have the goodness to forgive me, when I say, that if ever I become a wife again, love, an infinity of love, shall be the chief inducement.’

‘On whose side?’ cried lady Trusty hastily; ‘On both, I hope, madam,’ replied Mrs. Munden with a smile: ‘Take care, my dear,’ — rejoined the other, ‘for if you should find your-
‘self

‘self deceived in that of the man, your own
‘would only serve to render you the more unhap-
‘py.’

The fair widow was about to make some answer, which perhaps would have let lady Trusty into the whole secret of her heart, if the conversation had not been broke off by a very loud ringing of the bell at the great gate of the court yard before the house, on which, as it was natural for them, they both ran to the window to see what company were coming.

The first object that presented itself to them, was a very neat running footman, who on the gate being opened, came tripping up towards the house, and was immediately followed by a coach with one gentleman in it, drawn by six prancing horses, and attended by two servants in rich liveries, and well mounted; lady Trusty was somewhat surprised, as she never had seen either the person in the coach, or the equipage before, but infinitely more so when Mrs. Munden starting from the window, in the greatest confusion imaginable, cried, --- ‘Madam, with your leave, --- I will speak to him in the parlour.’ — ‘Speak to whom?’ said lady Trusty: — The other had not the power to answer, and was running out of the room, when a servant of sir Ralph’s came up to tell her, a gentleman, who called himself Truworth, was come to wait on her. — ‘I know — I know,’ cried she, ‘conduct him into the parlour.’

Prepared as she was by the expectation of his arrival, all her presence of mind was not sufficient to enable her to stand the sudden rush of joy, which on sight of him burst in upon her heart; --- nor was he less overcome, --- he sprang into her arms, which of themselves opened to receive him, and while he kissed away the tears that trickled from her eyes, his own bedewed her cheeks. ---

‘Oh

‘ Oh have I lived to see you thus ! ’ ---- cried he, ---- ‘ thus ravishingly kind ! ’ ---- ‘ And have I lived,’ rejoined she, ‘ to receive those proofs of affection from the best and most ill used of men : --- Oh Truworth ! ---- Truworth ! added she, ‘ I have not merited this from you.’ ---- ‘ You merit all things,’ --- said he, ‘ let us talk no more of what is past, but tell me that you now are mine ; --- I came to make you so by the irrevocable ties of love and law, and we must now part no more ! --- Speak my angel, --- my first, my last charmer,’ continued he, perceiving she was silent, blushed, and hung down her head ; --- ‘ let those dear lips confirm my happiness, and say the time is come, that you will be all mine.’ The trembling fair now having gathered a little more assurance, raised her eyes from the earth, and looking tenderly on him, --- ‘ you know you have my heart, cried she, and cannot doubt my hand.’

After this a considerable time was past in all those mutual endearments, which honour and modesty would permit, without Mrs. Munden’s once remembering the obligations she was under of relieving lady Trusty from the consternation she had left her in.

That lady had indeed heard her servant say who was below, but as Mrs. Munden had never mentioned the name of Mr. Truworth the whole time she had been with her, and had not any suspicion of the correspondence between them, much less could have the least notion of her affection for a gentleman, whom she had once refused, in spite of the many advantages an alliance with him offered, nothing could be more astonishing to her than this visit, and the disorder with which Mrs. Munden went down to receive it.

She was still ruminating on an event, which appeared so extraordinary to her, when the now
happy

happy lovers entered the room, and discovered by their countenances, some part of what she wished to know;— ‘I beg leave, madam,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘to introduce to your ladyship, a gentleman whose name and character you are not unacquainted with, Mr. Truworth.’

‘I am, indeed, no stranger to both,’ replied lady Trufty, advancing to receive him, ‘nor to the respect they claim:’ he returned this compliment with a politeness which was natural to him, and after they were seated, her ladyship beginning to express the satisfaction she felt in seeing a gentleman of whose amiable qualities she had so high an idea;— ‘Your ladyship does me too much honour,’ said he, ‘but I fear you will repent this goodness, when you shall find I am come with an intent to rob you of a companion, who I know is very dear to you.’

‘If you should succeed in the robbery you mention,’ answered she smiling, ‘you will make me ample atonement for it by the pleasure you will give me in knowing what I have lost is in such good hands.’

Mr. Truworth had no time to make any reply to these obliging words, sir Ralph who had dined abroad, came in that instant, not a little surprized to find so gay an equipage, and altogether unknown to him, before his door, but on his lady’s acquainting him with the name of their new guest, welcomed him with a complaisance not at all inferior to what she had shewn.—There requires little ceremony between persons of true breeding to enter into a freedom of conversation, and the good old baronet was beginning to entertain Mr. Truworth with some discourses, which at another time would have been very agreeable to him, but that obedient lover having undertaken in order to save the blushes of his fair mistress, to make them fully sensible of the motive, which had brought him into L——

delayed

delayed the performance no longer than was necessary to do it without abruptness.

Mrs. Munden, who in desiring he should break the matter, had not meant he should do it so suddenly, or in her presence, looked like the sun just starting from a cloud all the time he was speaking, and was ready to die with shame when sir Ralph said, that since all things were concluded between them, and there was no need for farther courtship, he could not see any reason why their marriage should not be immediately compleated: but lady Trusty, in compassion to her fair friend's confusion, opposed this motion: — the next day after the succeeding one, was however appointed without any shew of reluctance on the side of Mrs. Munden, and the inexpressible satisfaction of Mr. Trueworth.

He had lain the night before at an inn about eight miles short of sir Ralph's seat, and as he had no acquaintance either with him or his lady, had intended to make that his home during his stay in the country, but sir Ralph and lady Trusty would not consent to his departure, and all he could obtain from them was permission to send back his coach with one servant to take care of the horses.

No proposals having yet been made concerning a settlement for Mrs. Munden, by way of dowry, Mr. Trueworth took sir Ralph aside the next morning, and desired he would send for a lawyer, which he immediately did, — a gentleman of that profession happening to live very near — and on his coming, received such instructions from Mr. Trueworth for drawing up the writings as convinced sir Ralph both of the greatness of his generosity, and the sincerity of his love to the lady he was about to make his wife.

Expedition having been recommended to the lawyer, he returned soon after dinner with an instrument drawn up in so judicious a manner, that it
required

required not the least alteration ;—while sir Ralph and Mr. Truworth were locked up with him in order to examine it, Mrs. Munden received no inconsiderable addition to the present satisfaction of her mind, by the arrival of her brother Frank : after the first welcome being given,— ‘ You are ‘ come, captain,’ said lady Trusty, ‘ just time ‘ enough to be a witness of your sister’s marriage, ‘ which is to be celebrated to-morrow.’ --- ‘ Mar- ‘ riage,’ cried he, --- ‘ and without acquainting ‘ either of her brothers with her intentions! --- but ‘ I hope,’ continued he, ‘ it is not to disadvantage, ‘ as your ladyship seems not displeased at it.’ --- ‘ I ‘ assure you, captain,’ resumed lady Trusty, ‘ I ‘ knew nothing of the affair till yesterday, nor ‘ had ever seen before the gentleman your sister has ‘ made choice of, but love and destiny, added she, ‘ are not to be resisted,’ These words, and the serious air she assumed in speaking them, giving him cause to fear his sister was going to throw herself away, he shook his head, and seemed in a good deal of uneasiness, but had not opportunity to testify what he felt, any otherwise than by his looks. --- Sir Ralph and Mr. Truworth in that instant entered the room ; ---- the extreme surprize he was in at the sight of the latter, was such as prevented him from paying his respects to either in the manner he would have done, if more master of himself ; but Mr. Truworth easily guessing the emotions of his mind, lock’d him in his arms, saying, --- ‘ Dear Frank, I shall at last be so happy ‘ as to call you brother ;’ ---- ‘ Heavens, is it possi- ‘ ble! ----’ cried he, ‘ Am I awake? or is this illu- ‘ sion!’ --- then running to Mrs. Munden, ‘ Sister,’ said he, ‘ is what I hear a real fact! are you ‘ indeed to be married to Mr. Truworth?’ --- ‘ You hear I am,’ answered she smiling, ‘ and ‘ hear it from a mouth not accustomed to deceit ;’ he then flew to Mr. Truworth, crying, ‘ My ‘ dear,

‘ dear, dear Truworth, I little hoped this honour ;’ then turning to lady Trusty, --- ‘ Oh madam, said he, how agreeably have you received me ?’ ‘ I knew it would be so,’ ---replied she, ‘ yet I told nothing but the truth.

The extravagance of the young captain’s joy being a little over, Mr. Truworth presented Mrs. Munden with the parchment he had received from the lawyer, --- ‘ What is this ?’ demanded she :— ‘ Take it, take it,’ cried sir Ralph, ‘ it is no less than a settlement of eight hundred pounds a year to you, in case of accidents.’ ---- ‘ I accept it, sir,’ said Mrs. Munden to Mr. Truworth, ‘ as a fresh proof of your affection, but heaven forbid I should ever live to receive any other advantage from it.’ --- He kissed her hand with the most tender transports on these obliging words ; --- after which, they all seated themselves, and never was there a joy more perfect and sincere than what each of this worthy company gave demonstrations of in their respective characters. The next morning completed the wishes of the enamoured pair, and the satisfaction of their friends.

An account of this event was dispatched the next post to all, who had any welfare in the interest of the new wedded lovers : Mr. Thoughtless, tho’ very much engrossed by his own happiness, could not but rejoice in the good fortune of his sister : --- sir Basil, who since his thorough knowledge of Mrs. Munden, had a high esteem for her, was extremely glad, but his lady was warm even to an excess in her congratulations : in fine, there were few of her acquaintance who did not in some measure take part in their felicity.

Thus were the virtues of our heroine, (those follies that had defaced them being fully corrected) at length rewarded with a happiness, retarded only till she had render’d herself wholly worthy of receiving it.

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